TABLE OF CONTENTS
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A Postcolonial Revalorization of the Good News through Mother Tongue-Based and Multilingual Communication (MTB-MC)

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Abstract

Enduring colonial or imperial customs, politics, grammars, laws, social, and religious practices linger continuously in contemporary time. In most theological and philosophical debates disagreements over terminology tend to cloud the real issue. On the one hand, age-old theological and philosophical worldviews prevail; on the other hand, Communication faces new challenges that need new expressions that will touch the very core of the human person.

The faith-based communities in the Philippines previously received the Christian Good News through a language foreign to them due to colonization in which their faith in God was developed and nurtured. The preaching of the Good News was initially done through languages that were foreign to the

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indigenous people. As a consequence, the communicative effect was not as efficient as it would have been if done through a language that the local people could easily decipher. Through the development of historical-critical methods and postcolonial analysis, faith-based communities are clamoring for hybrid methods of communicating the Good News.

The clamor might be an indication that there is something lacking in the classical theological discourses. Considering the voluminous works of Fr. Franz-Josef Eilers, SVD, on Communication in Asia,[1] this proposed research is an attempt to look for an alternative approach of communicating the Good News of Christianity in the Filipino postcolonial context. Employing Discourse Analysis, it aims to explore a postcolonial revalorization of the Good News through Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Communication (MTB-MC). It proposes a framework of communicating the Christian Good News through Mother Tongue-Based and Multilingual Communication. A postcolonial revalorization of the Good News through MTB-MC may be a meaningful contribution to address what remains wanting in faith-based communities.

Keywords: *Language, postcolonial, communication, Good News, multilingual communication.*

Introduction

Communication in the mother tongue is the ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing), and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way in a full range of societal and cultural contexts—in education and training, work,

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[1] Fr. Franz-Josef Eilers, SVD, *a 2018 Asian Media, Information, and Communication Centre (AMIC) awardee for "Transformative Leadership", accessed November 19, 2019, https://amic.asia/amic-communication-awards/ exhaustively discussed in his writings the importance of Communication both in the pastoral and theoretical milieu.*

home, and leisure.[2] Communicating the Christian Good News through the use of Mother Tongue and Multilingual Communication (MTB-MC) is as old as the Christian Church itself.[3] However, the historical landscape has changed radically since its beginning. The change is partly attributed to the domination and colonization of the different imperial empires.

The colonizing empires carried with them their language and imposed the use of it as a medium of communication upon the people they dominated. The vision of Antonio de Nebrija, Bishop of Avila, as stated in the prologue of the *Castilian Grammar* published in 1492, was one that would prove prophetic in the following years, as the Spanish Empire extended its reign across the Atlantic. It was prophetic in that throughout the conquest of the Americas, and the centuries of colonialism, the language was used by the Spanish as a tool for conquest: to consolidate political power, to spread the Catholic faith, and to unify the empire.[4] The relationship between language and empire had been established long before Nebrija described it in his *Castilian Grammar*.

Language policies to bolster imperial power had been in place in the Roman Empire, in Spain, and in the Aztec and Incan Empires.[5] Consequently, "The presence of more than one language is seen to be a threat to national unity, and there is, therefore, a tendency toward monolingual policies in empires, resulting in the suppression of minority languages."[6] Peter Trudgill, a noted sociolinguist, remarks that "linguistic subjugation (or unification, depending on one's point of view) is "an important strategy in implementing political subjugation

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[2] Manoj Kumar Yadav, "Role of Mother Tongue in Second Language Learning," *International Journal of Research* 1, no.11 (December 2014): 572-582.

[3] Paul Everett Pierson, *The Dynamics of Christian Mission: History Through a Missiological Perspective* (USA: WCIU Press, 2009), 23.

[4] Zhenja La Rosa, "Language and Empire: The Vision of Nebrija," *The Student Historical Journal* 1 (1995): 27.

[5] La Rosa.

[6] La Rosa.

(or unification)."[7] As a consequence of language subjugation in the colonial period, colonial countries find themselves dependent on the colonizing countries.

The objective of this paper is to propose a postcolonial revalorization of the Good News through Mother Tongue-Based and Multilingual Communication (MTB-MC). Particularly it seeks to answer the following questions:

- What are the postcolonial suggestions for revaluing the Good News?
- What is Mother Tongue-Based and Multilingual Communication (MTB-MC)?
- How can the Good News be revalued through Mother Tongue-Based and Multilingual Communication (MTB-MC)?

This research employed Discourse Analysis[8] and the Hermeneutical act of Reading.[9] "The hermeneutical act of reading has been inspired by the hermeneutical philosopher Gadamer's thought that reading takes place, awakens wonder, broadens understanding, reveals the essence, and gives it expression as the possible and presupposed."[10] Koskinen & Lindström claimed that this method can be a "point of departure in one's own tradition that guides the uncovering, which precedes the interpretation toward a new envisioning"[11]

The context of the author is to be considered as the foundational experience to which the interpretative frame was developed and the "tradition" wherein the text was written in the guide towards the realization of a possible vision. As for Edwards, in *Extreme Attention to the Real: Levinas and Religious Hermeneutics,* there is a necessity to uncover the "original meaning of the text since the text carries with it the primal intent and vision that has been articulated in the past."[12] According to Koskinen and Lindström, "It is by posing questions to the text and by allowing the text to speak that the researcher can rest in the text and trust that the text can open up and uncover a new envisioning and different understanding."[13]

Vernacular Hermeneutics in Postcolonial Discourse

Postcolonial theory has been broadly described as a study of the effects of colonialism on cultures and societies. It is concerned with both how European nations conquered and controlled "Third World" cultures and how these groups have since responded to and resisted those encroachments. Postcolonialism, as both a body of theory and a study of political and cultural change, has gone and continues to go through three broad stages: an initial awareness of the social, psychological, and cultural inferiority enforced by being in a colonized state; the struggle for ethnic, cultural, and political autonomy; a growing awareness of cultural overlap and hybridity.[14] A postcolonial revalorization of the Good News has been a task for several theologians of the 19th century. One of the pioneering figures for postcolonial theory was Edward Said.[15] His publication of *Orientalism* in 1978,

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[7] Peter Trudgill, *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society* (London: Penguin Books, 1983), 152.

[8] Gillian Brown, and G. Yule, *Discourse analysis* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 19.

[9] Camilla A.L. Koskinen, and Unni Å. Lindström, "Listening to the Otherness of the Other: Envisioning Listening Based on a Hermeneutical Reading of Lévinas," *International Journal of Listening* 27, no. 3 (2013): 146-156.

[10] Koskinen and Lindström.

[11] Koskinen and Lindström

[12] Koskinen and Lindström.

[13] Koskinen and Lindström.

[14] Purnima Bose, "'The Post-Colonial Studies Reader', edited by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (Book Review)," *Victorian Studies* 39, no. 4 (1996): 585. See also "Key Terms in Post-Colonial Theory," accessed March 16, 2020, https://www3.dbu.edu/mitchell/postcold.htm

[15] Sut Jhally and Sanjay Talreja, "Edward Said on Orientalism," *Media Education Foundation*, 1998; Edward W Said et al., "Professor Edward Said in Lecture the Myth of the 'Clash of Civilizations,'" *Video Resources for the 21st*

as his contribution to comparative literature, opened up the space for discussions about colonial culture. "Said is increasingly attracting attention as a critic in France itself."[16] Though rarely recognized explicitly as such, it can be argued that the French nineteenth-century was thus at the heart of postcolonial thinking from the outset. The book edited by Fernando F. Segovia and Rasiah S. Sugirtharajah entitled *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings* (2009) represents a critical benchmark in postcolonial biblical criticism. This book is one of the most comprehensive and scholarly documents that reflect the postcolonial mindset needed to understand the nuances of proclaiming the Good News in the postcolonial context. "It places the reality and ramifications of imperial-colonial frameworks and relations at the center of biblical criticism."[17] The various entries in the book explore a more comprehensive range employing different postcolonial approaches.

In the course of colonization as well as in the process of decolonization, language and its appropriation are and have been of vital importance. As Bill Ashcroft *et al*. pointed out, language, with the help of institutionalized education, plays a central role in the installment and perpetuation of imperial oppression and hierarchical power, through which the metropolitan language becomes the norm and all other variants are marginalized.[18] This established power, however, is "rejected in the emergence of an effective post-colonial voice."[19]

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Century, 1998.

[16] Charles Forsdick and Jennifer Yee, "Towards a Postcolonial Nineteenth Century: Introduction," *French Studies* 72, no. 2 (2018): 167-175.

[17] Fernando F. Segovia, "Mapping the Postcolonial Optic in Biblical Criticism: Meaning and Scope," *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary intersections* (2005): 23-78.

[18] Merete Falck Borch, Eva Rask Knudsen, Martin Leer, and Bruce Clunies Ross. *Bodies and voices: the force-field of representation and discourse in colonial and postcolonial studies* (New York: BRILL, 2008), 252.

19 Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*. (London: Routledge, 2003), 114.

The medium for these new forms of expression may either be the vernacular language, or, in many cases, English. Salman Rushdie describes the effectiveness of postcolonial voices in reshaping English:

> What seems to me to be happening is that those peoples who were once colonized by the language are now rapidly remaking it, domesticating it, assisted by the English language's enormous flexibility and size, they are carving out large territories for themselves within its frontiers.[20]

Authors frequently delineate these linguistic territories, adapting them to their own cultural background, by using their own variety of English, heavily influenced by the vernacular language.[21] Stephen Bevans, SVD, a popular theologian in the field of contextual theology, in his widely read book *Models of Contextual Theology* and in his other written articles, explained that theology is contextual even in its earliest form in Biblical days when the people interpreted their experiences of the Living God. This contextual dimension of theology continued into the New Testament tradition with the theology articulated by the writers of the four Gospels as well as the epistles.[22] Given the fact that the Hebrew experiences of relationship with God as articulated in the Hebrew Scriptures, as well as the experiences of early followers of Jesus as written in the Christian Scriptures, manifest a "contextual dimension," it is only logical to think that theology which was articulated by contemporary theologians of the Church and their predecessors, the Church Fathers, must also exemplify a "contextual dimension."[23]

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[20] John Erickson, *Islam and Postcolonial Narrative*. (Cambridge [etc.]: Cambridge Univ. Press 2008), 144.

[21] Borch *et al*., *Bodies and Voices*, 252.

[22] Bevans, Stephen. "Models of Contextual Theology," Missiology 13, no. 2 (April 1985): 185–202, doi:10.1177/009182968501300205.

[23] Anthony Le Duc, "Cybertheology: Theologizing in the Digital Age," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, (2017): https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3056269.

The postcolonial vernacular theologians who worked profoundly on vernacular theology in Asia, particularly in the Philippines, recaptured the value of the local culture as the context of their theologizing. Vernacular hermeneutics, they said, has made "culture an important site for hermeneutics."[24] It has enabled faith-based communities to inculturate the Good News of Christianity and to revalorize the wisdom in indigenous cultures which many but not all colonizers denigrated. Filipino theologians like Fr. Dionisio M. Miranda, SVD, Leonardo N. Mercado, SVD, Jose De Mesa, Agnes Brazal, and Rebecca Cacho, among other Filipino theologians have been working profoundly on Asian theology in order to recapture the value of the local culture, particularly in the Philippines. For these theologians, vernacular hermeneutics has enabled Christianity to be inculturated and the wisdom in indigenous cultures that were once denigrated by missionaries to be revalorized.[25] The task of vernacular hermeneutics transcends the realm of academics; it penetrates the core values and cultural practices of the local Christian communities and makes it a locus of the Christian message.

Jose De Mesa emphasizes his shorter definition of theological re-rooting which he refers to as "the appropriation of the Judaeo-Christian Tradition by the local church into its indigenous culture." [26] In other words, it is "an endeavor to give the Gospel a truly Filipino expression for the benefit of both the Church and the culture."[27] In the definition, the concept of inner meaning refers to the core of the Gospel message, "the living Person of Christ." "He himself is the summary and content of the message of the Kingdom; he is himself the Christian message."[28] The inner meaning, however, is not culture-free. While transcendent, this living core is "never without a historically and culturally situated expression."[29] Following Vatican II, De Mesa believes that there is continuity between the message of salvation and culture.

Because of the need to search for a meaningful relationship with God that is not always adequately addressed by available Catholic theological reflections, numerous theologies have arisen in contemporary time. The diversity of experiences of people considering their context and dehumanizing situations has challenged theologians to look for more contextual and meaningful theological reflections. Theologies were developed to address the struggles of the poor in Latin America, the discriminated women, the Africans in the Sub-Sahara, in Asia, India, and in several contexts all over the world.

Anthony Le Duc, SVD[30] observes that theologians who responded to the need to theologize in the context of local culture were able to develop theologies of inculturation, while others who opted to theologize for the concerns of marginalized women developed feminist theologies and those who opted to theologize for ecological concerns developed eco-theology. Other theologians developed liberation theologies, while still others maintained the dogmatic discipline of theologizing. However, for Le Duc, "These designations imply more or less cultural or geographic boundaries while the term contextual theology has a wider scope that can encompass social realities beyond culture, ethnicity or geography."[31] For Bevans, there is a "theological imperative" to all kinds of contextual theologies since by itself it is meaningful for that context where it is performed.[32]

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[24] R. S. Sugirtharajah, "Thinking about Vernacular Hermeneutics Sitting in," *Vernacular hermeneutics* 2 (1999): 92.

[25] Agnes M. Brazal, *Research Project: Book Doing Vernacular Theo-Ethics in a Postmodern World*, accessed Feb. 6, 2019, https://las.depaul.edu/centers-and-institutes/center-for-world-catholicism-cultural-theology/about/Documents/BRAZALresearchABSTRACT.pdf.

[26] Jose De Mesa, *In solidarity with the Culture: Studies in Theological Re-rooting* (Quezon City: Maryhill School of Theology, 1987), 1.

[27] De Mesa, *In solidarity with the Culture,* 37.

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[28] José De Mesa, and Lode Wostyn, *Doing Theology: Basic Realities and Processes* (Manila: Wellspring Books 1982), 5.

[29] De Mesa and Wostyn, *Doing Theology*, 37.

[30] Le Duc, "Cybertheology."

[31] Le Duc, "Cybertheology."

[32] Bevans, "Models of Contextual Theology," 200.

This theological imperative exists because religions themselves are naturally contextual. In *Evangelii Gaudium* (#117), Pope Francis affirmed the importance of the context stating:

> We would not do justice to the logic of the incarnation if we thought of Christianity as monocultural and monotonous. While it is true that some cultures have been closely associated with the preaching of the Gospel and the development of Christian thought, the revealed message is not identified with any of them; its content is transcultural. Hence in the evangelization of new cultures or cultures that have not received the Christian message, it is not essential to impose a specific cultural form, no matter how beautiful or ancient it may be, together with the Gospel.[33]

According to Pope Francis, it is illogical to think that people who are immersed in different contexts like that in the west "imitate modes of expression which European nations developed at a particular moment of their history."[34] With the assumption that there is no single culture that has the monopoly of the truth and that there is no single expression that could illustrate the whole mystery of God, theologizing is an endeavor not confined to some but rather it is an open invitation to all. For Le Duc, "When the context as found in a particular time and place is taken into account in the act of theologizing, one can begin to identify theologies inspired by cultural identity."[35]

The Philippine Colonial Discourse

The Philippines existed as Spain's colony for 350 years, followed by forty-five years under American rule, and three ravaging years under

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[33] Holy Father Pope Francis, *Apostolic Exhortation: Evangelii Gaudium*, Vatican Press, 2013.
[34] Pope Francis.
[35] Le Duc, "Cybertheology."

the Japanese military occupation.[36] Christianity came to the Philippine Isles via Ferdinand Magellan's colonial expedition. Arriving in 1521, Magellan represented both the Catholic Church and the Spanish crown. The Spanish conquest and evangelization came at a time when Spain had the momentum of the "*Reconquista.*" Spain's rebound from the long subjugation by the Moors ushered a "*Siglo de Oro,*" golden age of the cultural consolidation. The spirit of the *Reconquista* modified itself into an expansionist vision under the *Patronato Real* in which the Pope granted special status to the Spanish Crown as patron of the Church in evangelization and service.[37]

Language Subjugation

According to Kenneth E. Rayco, "Language learning was an integral part of religious instruction during the Spanish colonial period. It was through the local tongues that the missionaries were able to lead and shepherd the Filipinos to the Christian faith."[38] For Rayco, "A common misconception among Filipinos, which persists until today, is that Spanish was not taught in order to keep the Filipinos ignorant and to prevent dissent against the authorities."[39] Rayco noted that some "historians point out that the missionaries learned the local languages in order to minister more effectively to the Filipinos." Rayco further explained the dynamics of language use during the colonial era: "The missionaries did not impose their language for practical reasons like the scant number of Spanish speakers in the islands most of whom were centered in Intramuros, the old walled city of Manila. In fact, the

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[36] Timoteo D. Gener, "The Catholic Imagination and Popular Religion in Lowland Philippines: Missiological Significance of David Tracy's Theory of Religious Imaginations" *Mission Studies* 22 (2005): 25-57.
[37] There is, therefore, a truth to Strobel's (and NVM Gonzales') description that the Philippines is "a lahar (flowing lava) of colonizations" (Strobel, 1993: 8).
[38] Kenneth E Rayco, "Language, Printing, Art and Education in the History of Early Christianity in the Philippines" Asian *Research Center for Religion and Social Communication*, Vol. 16 No. 2. (2018): 63-89. https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_ kygwa402xwcHpwNFpXSnMwM28/view
[39] Rayco, "Language," 65.

missionaries preserved the local languages an example of which is the baybayin (the indigenous Tagalog writing system) by copying it and explaining it in their books."[40]

However, during the American occupation, there was a move to identify one common language to be used in the Philippines. The first Commission sent by President McKinley to the Philippine Islands proposed that a language that would be spoken and understood throughout the Archipelago was essential for the development of the Filipinos and their advancement in civilization. A national speech, not many tribal tongues, was essential.[41] The commission really had only three choices: a Filipino dialect, the Spanish language, or English. A choice of dialect was eliminated as there were many in use, with a half dozen of these the tongue of the half a dozen prominent groups or tribes of the population.[42] This left the choice between Spanish, the language "esteemed for its stateliness and for its sonorous qualities," and English, the "language of commerce." Emma Sarepta Yule explained:

> Spain's long sovereignty over the Islands was a strong argument for the speech of Cervantes and Calderon and led to its serious consideration. But it was found that in no real sense was Spanish the tongue of the people of the Islands; to only a very, very small proportion was it a vehicle for conveying thought. It was the tongue of the governing, not the governed. Also, although Spanish has "musical terminations," "great copiousness of vocabulary" and the literature is rich in fiction, drama, and ballads, it does not offer as a medium of communication with the world at large the advantages that English offers. And English literature, also, is very rich in

original productions in all forms and in translations of the best from other kinds of literature. The language-comment on it as a language is omitted-not only girdles the earth equatorially but at many spherical angles. It is rapidly becoming the language of international relations as well as the language of commerce and science, possessing vast scientific vocabularies. A clinching argument was that there is more permanent as well as current literature on agriculture and the sciences on which it is based and to which it is closely allied, on commerce, and on public health, in the English language than in all other languages combined. And if the Filipinos were to go forward, these were the subjects about which they must be informed, and about which they were woefully ignorant. They must not only study these subjects, but they must also be able to keep in touch with the new findings in the laboratory and field. For Nature has so ordered that prosperity can come to the Filipinos only through agriculture and trade. So the voice of the Commission was for the English language.[43]

The Ecclesiastical Power in the Period of Colonization

The Spanish colonizers made use of the Bible as a primary source of preaching about the Good News. Several authors were convinced that by implicating the Bible in the taking of the Filipino "psyche" biblical texts are marked as powerful rhetorical instruments of "imperialism." Subjugation and alienation are seen in how the preachers in all strata of the Christian church in the Philippines carried out their tasks. The Good News was preached and interpreted in a way that listeners especially the poor were forced to accept even though they had a lack of understanding of its true nature. It was not unlike what Marx had characterized as "opium." In the end, cultural

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[40] Rayco, "Language," 66.

[41] Emma Sarepta Yule, "The English language in the Philippines," *American Speech* 1, no. 2 (1925): 111-120, accessed February 12, 2020, https://doi.org/10.2307/452557.

[42] Yule, "The English language in the Philippines,"111.

[43] Yule, "The English language in the Philippines," 111.

exchange was compromised and cultural domination and assimilation were promoted by imperial Christian evangelizers. Moreover, biblical interpretations that emerged from colonial and imperialist contexts more often than not condemned the indigenous practices as animistic or pagan.[44] Furthermore, according to Lumbera, "with the emergence of Filipino writing in English, vernacular writing suffered a loss of stature and was consigned to the level of popular publications interested only in entertaining or pacifying audiences" [45] Because biblical texts are products of colonial experiences, a postcolonial revalorization must be exercised.

Colonial Theological Tendencies

The colonial mentality of the Filipino was also seen even in the religious and theological formations. Most of the so-called "good theologians" were trained in some reputable school of theology abroad. They tended to theorize in the framework of Western theology, which they attempted to apply to the native Filipino. At times, those clergy who received their seminary formation from abroad, especially from Rome, tended to dominate the clergy who received a local formation. Moreover, seminary formation and even catechetical formation in the Philippines were deeply penetrated by Western colonizing thought.

Philippine Island is dominated by Christians either Catholics or Protestants and some other Christian groups which are neither Catholic nor Protestants.[46] The experience of Hispanic Christianity and pre-Hispanic indigenous religion was not one-sided. There was a long history of integration and inculturation.[47] In his terminology, John Leddy Phelan called this as the "Philippinization" of Catholicism characterized by Christian forms with much of the pre-Hispanic animistic beliefs.[48]

There are two implications for these in the observation of Mario Balosco. According to Balosco, "Folk Catholicism exemplifies the conjunction of resistance and submission at the very heart of Christianization."[49] However Reynaldo Ileto, in his book *Pasyon and Revolution*, asserts that a critical reading of the Passion narrative reveals that there are political moldings of events.[50] There was hybridity in the seminary formation and in return hybridity in the interpretation of the Gospel values. The Spanish friars embodied the colonial mandate and the native clergy were not clear of their role in the hierarchy. There was suspicion that the local clergy was a possible threat to the colonizing friars.[51]

It was not surprising that during the 1896 Philippine Revolution some native priests joined the revolution and gave birth to an independent Catholic church (IFI 1902) under the leadership of Father Gregorio Aglipay and Isabelo de Los Reyes.[52] Likewise, during the

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[44] Jeffrey L. Staley, "Changing Woman: Postcolonial Reflections on Acts 16.6-40," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 21, no. 73 (1999): 113-135. https://doi.org/10.1177/0142064X9902107306.

[45] David Jonathan Bayot, "Bienvenido L. Lumbera on Revaluation: The National Stages of Philippine Literature and Its History," *IDEYA: Journal of Humanities* 8, no. 1 (2006): 82-116. https://doi.org/10.3860/ideya.v8i1.69.

[46] Jonas Adelin Jørgensen, "Global Christianity," in *Encyclopedia of Sciences and Religions*, ed. Anne L. C. Runehov and Lluis Oviedo (2013): https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-8265-8_885.

Victor Aguilan, *Theology of Struggle: a Postcolonial Critique of Philippine*

Christianity & Society, Dissertation draft, (Silliman University Divinity School: April 15, 2017): 5-10.

[47] Aguilan, *Theology of Struggle*.

[48] Richard F. Salisbury and John Leddy Phelan, "The Hispanization of the Philippines; Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses 1565-1700," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1959): 152-163. https://doi.org/10.2307/595872.

[49] Mario Bolasco and Edicio De la Torre. *Points of Departure: Essays on Christianity, Power, and Social Change* (USA: University of Michigan, St.Scholastica's College, 1994), 23.

[50] David Wurfel and Reynaldo Clemena Ileto, "Pasyon and Revolution. Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910," *Pacific Affairs* 55, no. 2 (Summer 1982): 346-348. https://doi.org/10.2307/2757641.

[51] John. N. Schumacher, "The Rizal Bill of 1956: Horacio de la Costa and the Bishops," *Philippine Studies* 59, no. 4 (2011): 529-553.

[52] Michael Paul Onorato and John N. Schumacher, "Revolutionary Clergy: The Filipino Clergy and the Nationalist Movement, 1850-1903," *The American*

American occupation, in several resistance movements against American domination, such as the "*pulahanes*," Christian elements also participated.[53]

Postcolonial Reactions or Nativist Tendency?

The Proclamation of the Good News by the Spaniards in the Philippine land turned out to be a proclamation of a colonizer's kingdom. Unfortunately, the Good News which Jesus proclaimed was reinterpreted wrongly by those who were supposed to be "apostles" of the message. William Henry Scott said:

> …the Spanish colonial system which identified Church and State put into the hands of the religious a tempting power which bore within it the seeds of abuse and corruption. By the 19th century, the Spanish friars enjoyed such a suffocating monopoly on farmland that they became the main target of that revolutionary literature which finally united the Filipinos in armed rebellion in 1896.[54]

Scott explains it further in saying that:

> …within the Church itself there were demands for reform, and Filipino clergy agitated against both the arbitrary power of the foreign friars and what we would nowadays call racial discrimination – e.g., native clergy always occupied second-rate positions and were never elevated to Episcopal rank. Three Filipino priests who were executed

on trumped-up charges in 1872 for having taken a too actively anti-friar stand on the centuries-old question of turning the parishes over to secular clergy served as martyrs in the revolutionary cause. The charge was also leveled against the friars that their educational system doomed the Filipino people to a superstitious kind of folk Catholicism. It was therefore inevitable that when hostilities finally broke out, the Church would be inextricably involved.[55]

Jeffry V. Ocay in his work noted:

> When the Spaniards came, we can notice that domination and resistance became conspicuous as the native Filipinos violently reacted to the untoward disposition of the colonizers. This can be seen in the series of uprisings that constantly posed as "threat" to the nearly four centuries of Spanish domination. What is also noticeable during the entire span of Spanish domination was the gradual but progressive development of Filipino critical consciousness which climaxed in the 1896 Revolution. In the eighteenth century, the Filipinos became more conscious about the arbitrariness of feudalism as the Spanish friars unjustly increased land rent, expanded their haciendas through land grabbing, and forced the Filipino masses not only to produce a surplus in staple foods but also to produce more surplus of raw crops for export to various capitalist countries.[56]

Ocay presented a picture of domination and finally meeting

Historical Review 89, no. 4 (October 1984*)*: 1140 https://doi.org/10.2307/1866537

[53] Michael Paul Onorato, "A History of the Philippines: From the Spanish Colonization to the Second World War Renato Constantino," *Pacific Historical Review* 46, no. 3 (August 1977): 519-520. https://doi.org/10.2307/3637533.

[54] William Henry Scott, "The Philippine Independent Church in History," *Resource Blog on Anything and Everything IFI* (March 2, 2011): https://aglipayan.wordpress.com/2011/08/02/406/.

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[55] Scott.

[56] Jeffry V. Ocay, "Domination and Resistance in the Philippines: From the Pre-Hispanic to the Spanish and American Period," *LUMINA* 21, no. 1 (2010): 30-31.

a resistance coming from the local clergy of the Philippine land. Perhaps some of this local Filipino clergy understood exactly what Jesus meant by "Thy Kingdom come." Ocay commented, "The most conspicuous revolutionary move initiated by the Filipino clergy was the establishment of the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* (Philippine Independent Church) in August 1902."[57]

William Henry Scott recounted the event as a nativist resistance. Father Aglipay, an excommunicated native priest, celebrated mass on October 27, in defiance of Roman authority, and in an address on that occasion definitely renounced it by saying the New Church would maintain practically all the religious forms of the Roman Church.[58]

The Need for Postcolonial Revalorization

Postcolonial studies have recently made significant inroads into biblical studies, giving rise to numerous conference papers, articles, essays, and books. The volume *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism* is the most in-depth and multifaceted introduction to this emerging field to date. It probes postcolonial biblical criticism from a number of different but interrelated angles in order to bring it into as sharp a focus as possible so that its promise—and potential pitfalls—can be better appreciated.[59] Most of the time biblical interpretations are so literal that it points to realities directly affecting the here and now concerns of the Filipinos.

Following the arguments of Agnes M. Brazal,[60] this research, nonetheless, contends that the vernacular is still an important locus for biblical hermeneutics. Sugirtharajah[61] argues that postcolonial criticism interrogates the text in various ways, posing questions such as: How has the empire been depicted—as benevolent or evil? How does the author represent the occupied—as victims or as grateful beneficiaries? It will try to explore postcolonialism's scrutiny of the public nature of biblical studies through its professionalized and specialized guilds and bodies. How do these organizations structure themselves? Whose interests do they serve? What religious ideology do they reflect? Brazal says that "this kind of method is postcolonial-intercultural because it stresses mutual listening and dialogue between the local culture and the Christian tradition and a consequent positive transformation in the view of the other."[62]

In his observation, Segovia noted the initial challenge on how to situate postcolonial studies in biblical hermeneutics.[63] This was corroborated by the observation of Punt by saying that postcolonial revalorization has "a different focus and purpose, rather than a different hermeneutical method."[64] Punt is inclined to conclude that postcolonial "revalorization of the Good News" is a form of "ideology criticism." Having said this Punt pointed out that postcolonial revalorization's concern is more of an analysis of socio-political context and underlines the factors that silenced the "other" through strategic colonial strategies in a postcolonial setting.[65] Postcolonial

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[57] Adrian Hermann, "Introduction to the Early Periodicals of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente," in *Discourses of Indigenous-Christian Elites in Colonial Societies in Asia and Africa around 1900*, Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints Ateneo de Manila University (2019): https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvc5pfwk.15.

[58] Scott, "The Philippine Independent Church in History," 22.

[59] Joseph Marchal, Stephen Moore, and Fernando Segovia, "Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 125, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 622-625. https://doi.org/10.2307/27638395.

[60] Brazal, *Research Project: Book Doing Vernacular Theo-Ethics in a Postmodern World*, 1.

[61] R.S. Sugirtharajah, *Exploring Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: History, Method, Practice* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 12.

[62] Brazal, *Research Project,* 1.

[63] L.S. Rakundwa, "Postcolonial Theory as a Hermeneutical Tool for Biblical Teading," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 64, no. 1 (2008): 339-351.

[64] Jeremy Punt, "Intersections in Queer Theory and Postcolonial Theory, and Hermeneutical Spin-offs," *The Bible and Critical Theory* 4, no. 2 (2011), accessed January 15, 2020, https://doi.org/10.2104/bc080024.

[65] Punt, "Intersections."

revalorization then is an approach that could be helpful in analyzing issues that tackle race, gender, class, tribe, citizenship, and the construction of political powers within sociological and geographical settings.[66]

Reclaiming MTB-MC in Postcolonial Context

The linguistic and cultural diversity in the Philippines brings much complexity to the issue of language policy not only in education but also in the different Christian churches. With more than 7,000 islands and 181 distinct languages,[67] the Philippines offers a challenging environment for implementing a language policy that can serve the whole country. Communication in the mother tongue is the ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written forms (listening, speaking, reading and writing), and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way in a full range of societal and cultural contexts: in education and training, work, home, and leisure.

Franz-Josef Eilers, SVD, explained that "Asian cultures have strong communicative elements and dimensions in their use of symbols, in their ritual celebrations, community structures, and values-based very often on verbal and non-verbal communication."[68] Verbal communication is indispensable in communicating the Good News. Language is a method of communicating ideas, thoughts, and desires by means of sounds for psychological and physiological survival. Asian countries like the Philippines differ in ethnicity, culture, and language. This diversity presents a major challenge to

the proclamation of the Good News from different backgrounds.

In his "Masked Philosopher" interview with *Le Monde ONE* a few years before his death, French philosopher Michel Foucault said, "I'm saying that people must be constantly able to plug into a culture and in as many ways as possible."[69] He thought that teaching should be liberated from any institutional setting and that it should be "a possibility that is always being offered." He saw this as a democratic way of helping people to learn, to be able to see things differently, to find new ways of relating to society, to bring new ideas to life.[70] If the proclamation of the Good News is limited to the use of a language foreign to the indigenous people it will limit its essential message.

We need different ways of learning and plugging into different fascinating areas of life. This would help people to really use their imagination, and as a consequence of this, "it would light fires, watch the grass grows, listen to the wind, and catch the seafoam in the breeze and scatter it."[71] In addition to opening up the barriers of learning, contributions can be made to individual and social development. Development here not only pertains to cognitive development, but it could also be about getting excited, inspired or even empowered or liberated. UNESCO[72] promotes mother tongue-based bilingual or multilingual approaches in education as an important factor for inclusion and quality in education. Research shows this approach has a positive impact on learning and learning outcomes.

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[66] Punt and Rukundwa, "Postcolonial Theory as a Hermeneutical Tool for Biblical Reading."

[67] P. Lewis, G. Simons, and C. Fennig (Eds.), *Ethnologue: Languages of the World,* 17th ed. (Dallas, Texas: SIL International, 2013), accessed March 1, 2013, http://www.ethnologue.com.

[68] Franz-Josef Eilers, "Religion and Social Communication in Asia: Towards a Research Agenda," *Religion and Social Communication* 16, no. 1 (2018): https://www.asianresearchcenter.org/arc-journal.

[69] Nicholas de Villiers, "Confessions of a Masked Philosopher: Anonymity and Identification in Foucault and Guibert," *Symplokē* 16, no. 1/2 (2008): 75-91.

[70] Timo Halttunen, Mari Koivisto, and Stephen Billett, "Promoting, Assessing, Recognizing and Certifying Lifelong Learning,*" International Perspectives and Practices* 20 (2014): 3-19. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-8694-2. Perspectives and Practices, 2014, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-8694-2.

[71] Leigh Gilmore, *The Limits of Autobiography: Trauma and Testimony* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), 145. https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501724343.

[72] Linda King, ed., *Education in a Multilingual World: Unesco Education Position Paper 2003* (Paris: Unesco, 2003), 10-20.

The positive impact of using both mother tongue and multilingual communication in education implies that it could also bring about the same positive outcome when it comes to the proclamation of the Good News. The proclamation of the Good News for a long time has been in the hand of the dominant powers. However, it has been observed that more and more people were not able to internalize the core message of the Good News. This observation is the opposite of the subjugated and persecuted situations of the communities that produced and transmitted the Bible. In the hands of the powerful, the Good News was used to institutionalize the hegemonic culture. It was interpreted using the language of the colonizers to justify dominance and expansion.

Lessons from Postcolonial Revalorization of Acts 2:7b-11

It is good to recall that the Pentecost[73] was a significant event in the life of the Christian Church. Weeks earlier, Jews and proselytes from at least 15 regions of the far-flung Roman Empire and beyond had packed Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. On that day, thousands of them heard not in confusion as those at ancient Babel did, but with an understanding of ordinary people filled with Holy Spirit proclaiming the Good News in numerous languages spoken in the empire.[74] That occasion marked the birth of the Christian congregation and the start of a multilingual, international educational project that has continued down to this day.

In Acts, the Holy Spirit creates the miracle of ordinary people being able to speak a foreign language, specifically speaking other people's mother tongues. The mother tongue is usually reserved for private spaces between close family and friends. But on Pentecost, this private speech was displayed in public. Instead of speaking Greek or Latin like good Roman citizens, the Spirit invited Jesus' followers to speak the intimate languages of mothers cooing their children.

> Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews, and proselytes, Cretans, and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power. (Acts 2:7b-11)

The Spirit invited people to share these close and intimate spaces of love with their sisters and brothers in Christ. God wants all to join together in marvelous ways. There is an invitation from the Spirit to the apostles: Will you continue to speak the mother tongue of your neighbors? Will you humble yourself to learn another's language? Will you understand their food, land, history, quirks, and all the things that make them a "people"?

There is also an invitation to the hearers from all these countries. The listeners have to decide whether or not to receive that intimacy. Will I allow these crazy foreign preachers to be this close to me? Will I accept them in this space that I usually protect from outsiders? Or will I reject and taunt them for their lavish displays of love? "But others sneered and said, 'They are filled with new wine'" (Acts 2:13).

The Holy Spirit is at work to restore people to unity, to heal divisions of all types. And it begins with the ability to speak to and listen to one another. Pentecost was not about asserting Christian dominance or exceptionalism.[75] That was not the kind of "power" that

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[73] The Christian holy day of Pentecost, which is celebrated fifty days after Easter Sunday, commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus Christ while they were in Jerusalem celebrating the Feast of Weeks, as described in the Acts of the Apostles.

[74] Acts 2:1-12 New International Version (NIV) Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

[75] D. Mark Davis, "Pentecost and Shavuot," *Left Behind and Loving It (Blog.*

Jesus promised (Acts 1:8). Instead, the power that the Holy Spirit gives us the power to humble oneself and submit to other people. The Spirit gives the power to speak new dialects because that is a way to display love to strangers.[76]

Postcolonial Attempt in proclaiming the Good News through MTB-MC

Revalorization of the Good News through MTB-MC is often presented as a wide spectrum of stances and practices, emerging with the awareness of imperial forces and accompanying domination strategies. In the process of doing so we have to consider various strategies. As Dube argued, "One has to employ strategies of resistance to colonizing thought while exploring alternative positions and practices to foster liberating interdependence"[77] between nations, races, genders, economics and cultures.

The task of revalorization of the Good News through MTB-MC is a critical task. Particularly it is to be critical with the written text of the Good News. We have to consider that "textual studies" must be pushed beyond the discrete boundaries of the page and the book into institutional practices and social structures."[78] This is a prerequisite for postcolonial biblical studies and interpretation. As Punt argued, "Postcolonial biblical interpretation is not intended to be a either a monolithic approach with eyes only for the geopolitical

scene of historical colonization or modern superpower activity, nor can it afford to aspire to become an all-encompassing and replacement master narrative."[79] As far as Sugirtharajah is concern, "It must be stressed that it [postcolonialism] is not a homogenous project, but a hermeneutical salmagundi, consisting of extremely varied methods, materials, historical entanglements, geographical locations, political affiliations, cultural identities, and economic predicaments."[80]

The postcolonial revalorization of the Good News through MTB-MC allows the cry of the poor to be heard and take their place at the center stage of not only religious discourses but in all interconnected dimensions of human existence. It is through MTB-MC that a free and fearless articulation of what had been repressed voice of the marginalized that the Good News of Christianity springs out. MTB-MC is the vessel for God's communication of liberation for those who were deprived for a free speech by the dominating structures.

While revalorization of the Good News through MTB-MC generally presented a linguistic dynamics, it is always directed to include studies which address "nations" and political power formations, issues concerning race, gender, sexual orientation and others. The voice of the "ordinary people" have so to be heard and be included in the social discourse.[81] The colonizers in the past defined most of the ways on how the human person behave in the society. Because of this the "ordinary people" also called "*Filipino Masa*" are simply seen as actors performing the script written by the powerful colonizers. By revalorization of the Good News through MTB-MC these "*Filipino Masa*" are not only encourage to "act the script" but they themselves will write the script that they will act.

Published 28 May 2017), accessed January 4, 2020, http://leftbehindandlovingit. blogspot.com/2014/06/pentecost-and-shavuot.html.

[76] Matthew L. Skinner, "Acts. By Willie James Jennings. Belief: A Theological Commentary on the Bible. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2017. Pp. xvii+ 289" *Religious Studies Review* 43, no. 4 (2017): 403-403, accessed January 15,2020, https://doi.org/10.1111/rsr.13250.

[77] Musa W. Dube, "Reading for Decolonization," *Semeia: An Experimental Journal for Biblical Criticism* (2006): 38.

[78] Jeremy Punt, "The New Testament, Theology and Imperialism: Some Postcolonial Remarks on *Beyond New Testament Theology*," *Neotestamentica* 35, no. 1-2 (2001): 129-145.

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[79] Jeremy Punt, "Postcolonial Biblical criticism in South Africa: Some Mind and Road Mapping," *Neotestamentica* 37, no. 1 (2003): 59-85.

[80] Rasiah S. Sugirtharajah, *Asian Biblical Hermeneutics and Postcolonialism: Contesting the Interpretations* (Sheffield : Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 15.

[81] Georg M. Gugelberger, "Postcolonial Cultural Studies," *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory & Criticism* (1994): 581-585.

Postcolonial revalorization of the Good News through MTB-MC posits a reflective modality which allows for a critical rethinking (thinking "through" and therefore "out of") of historical imbalances and cultural inequalities which were established by colonialism.[82] A postcolonial revalorization of the Good News through MTB-MC concerns itself with social formation and analysis as well as cultural production. The local culture has to be cultivated. The aim of cultivating culture is an attempt to rewrite history. The MTB-MC will play an important role in re-writing the history. It is a MTB-MC history illuminating the vision of new Christian ideals.

Colonialism is not just about territorial subjugation. It also creates cultural space that silences and disenfranchises those who do not hold power.[83] This dynamics of domination has several forms in contemporary time and it comes into the different forms of neocolonialism. Likewise, new forms of subjugation happen in globalization through the massive use of the Internet. Such reality has brought new challenges in the proclamation of the Good News.

A postcolonial revalorization of the Good News through Mother Tongue-Based and Multilingual Communication (MTB-MC) for it to be meaningful have to be understood as a task of proclaiming the Good News in five senses:

First is the sense of "face to face" encounter. In this sense, those whosoever engage in the promotion of Good News must consider the importance of "personal encounter." This encounter may happen among people who come from different places (recall the experience of the early followers of Jesus in the Acts of the Apostles). This is the initial and foundational experience where they used a language other than their mother tongue to express themselves. In some cases, those who proclaim the Good News in different places like the missionaries who live and work in an environment where using their mother tongue is usually not possible in daily life are challenged to learn the Mother Tongue of their mission stations. Being confronted with learning a new language makes one think about the use of the mother tongue is necessary and it will efficaciously deliver the Good News. Furthermore, being in touch with friends and family from the home country shows the quality of understanding in daily life in that country. It also shows the need to learn another language to feel more at home by using the guest country's language. It will also help if some volunteers might offer language courses in their mother tongue while others will be hosted in a country where people speak the same mother tongue as them.[84]

Second is the sense of proclaiming the Good News from "one language to another." This is a logical consequence of the first sense. The concept of Dynamic Equivalence, put forward by Eugene Nida in *Toward a Science of Translating*[85] and *The Theory and Practice of Translation*[86] (1969), changed the landscape of the translation practice and theory. For decades, it has played a major role in moving translation studies into the realm of science and in demonstrating the value of linguistics as a potential tool for translation practice and research.[87] Moreover, the postcolonial suggestion is that one must use a language that transcends boundaries.

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[82] L. Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A critical introduction* (New York: Columbia University Press 1998), 176.

[83] Kay Higuera Smith, Jayachitra Lalitha, and L. Daniel Hawk, eds., *Evangelical Postcolonial Conversations: Global Awakenings in Theology and Praxis* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press 2014), 463-464. doi:10.1163/15733831-12341370.

[84] Manoj Kumar Yadav, "Role of Mother Tongue in Second Language Learning." 572-582.

[85] J. T. Waterman, and E.A. Nida, "Toward a Science of Translating: With Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating," *Language* 42, no. 1 (1966): 93-105. https://doi.org/10.2307/411603.

[86] S. L'Vov, "The Theory and Practice of Translation," *Soviet Studies in Literature* 1, no. 3 (1965): 89-96, https://doi.org/10.2753/RSL1061-1975010389.

[87] Philip C. Stine, "Dynamic Equivalence Reconsidered," *The Translator* 10, no. 1 (2004): 129-135. https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2004.10799171.

Dynamic equivalence is not comprehensive enough. In some cases translation is limited and simplistic. In his article, "Language Crossing and the Problematisation of Ethnicity Socialisation,"[88] sociolinguist Ben Rampton defines language crossing as follows: "Language crossing involves code alternation by people who are not accepted members of the group associated with the second language that they are using (code-switching into varieties that are not generally thought to belong to them)"[89] "This kind of switching involves a distinct sense of movement across social or ethnic boundaries and it raises issues of legitimacy which, in one way or another, participants need to negotiate in the course of their encounter."[90]

Indeed, in this sense the appropriationist desires to blend indigenous and Western discourse into a cohesive project that is hybrid in nature.[91] We can, therefore, conclude that the Asian and Western cultures will "establish the co-existence of native and European language in an equal relationship free of hierarchy."[92] It is only when we treat each other as co-equals in dialogue and either languages are co-equal (English is not superior to any language) that the real essence of the proclamation of the Good News may be realized. One language to another language will enrich the Good News through its cultural richness and expressions.

Third is the sense of translating "from words to deeds." The colonial period was characterized by the domination of the powerful over the marginalized. The relationship most of the time was one-sided. The power to command was always in the hand of the few elite and the majority were just blindly obeying the oppressive and dehumanizing

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[88] Ben Rampton, "Language Crossing and the Problematisation of Ethnicity and Socialisation," *Pragmatics* 5, no. 4 (1995): 485-513. https://doi.org/10.1075/prag.5.4.04ram.

[89] Rampton, "Language Crossings."

[90] Rampton, "Language Crossings."

[91] Jonathan Gosling and Peter Villiers, *Fictional Leaders: Heroes, Villains and Absent Friends* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 13.

[92] Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (London: Heinemann, 1958), 12.

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commands. Postcolonial communication happens among equals. The spoken language is an empowering language. MTB-MC redefines "word" as not just referring to the spoken word. Rather it is seen as an act of mutuality. The spoken word should be translated into a liberating and life-giving deed.[93]

Fourth is the sense of "revaluing the context." Colonialism is an event taking place in a particular context. By looking at the Good News and its interpretation, postcolonial reading must take this reality into consideration. Sugirtharajah, one of the main campaigners of postcolonialism in biblical scholarship, states that postcolonial criticism as a biblical hermeneutics can help to "revalue the colonial ideology, stigmatization and negative portrayals embedded in the content, the plot, and characterization."[94] It entails looking for the colonial intentions—be they political, cultural or economic—that informed and influenced the writer's context. The context of the recipient of the Good News is to be considered important. This means that whoever is proclaiming the Good News must take into account the dynamics of human existence in the scene of the interconnected dimensions of becoming human in that particular location.

Fifth, MTB-MC promotes *"reconstructive reading of the Good News."* Through reconstructive reading, MTB-MC enables the promoters and recipient of the Good News to see the concerns of the liberation struggles of the past and the present. It is concerned and interacts with circumstances such as hybridity (*mestiza*, *akamecerane),* new identities, fragmentation, and deterritorialization. Postcolonial criticism interrogates colonial interpretation "to draw attention to the inescapable effects of colonization and colonial ideals." It investigates

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[93] Antonio Reyes, "Strategies of Legitimization in Political Discourse: From Words to Actions," *Discourse & Society* 22, no. 6 (November 17, 2011): 781–807. https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926511419927.

[94] Bridget Culpepper, "Review of RS Sugirtharajah (ed.), *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World* (3rd ed.)," *The Bible and Critical Theory* 4, no. 1 (2011): https://doi.org/10.2104/bc080009.

interpretations of "contested colonial interests."[95] Such a view helps to establish a reconstructed identity from the colonial context; in particular, it promotes the use of hybridity in language use, which includes the use of MTB-MC.

Concluding Remarks

Postcolonialism arose in the latter half of the twentieth century to challenge the problem of coloniality at the level of our language and our actions (praxis). Postcolonialism seeks to disrupt forms of domination and empower the marginalized to be agents of transformation. The task of empowering the marginalized implies that they too are to be empowered in any way in the proclamation of the Good News. The "marginalized" is the locus of the postcolonial proclamation. The revalorization of the Good News happens not for them but "in them." They are the "Good News." With this in mind, MTB-MC has to be re-activated as a medium for communicating the Good News. It is the mode of communication used by the early disciples of Jesus who were marginalized. MTB-MC is what took place in the day of Pentecost that allowed the early followers of Jesus to be heard and to be recognized.

Maintaining the languages of ethnic and cultural groups is critical for the preservation of cultural heritage and identity. Using one's mother-tongue at home makes it easier for children to be comfortable with their own cultural identity. A postcolonial revalorization of the Good News through Mother Tongue-Based and Multilingual Communication (MTB-MC) shall flourish out of the collaboration between women and men, between clergy and laity who desire a shared language for learning about God and the Good News, and about the self in relation with another.

It is is also a translation derived from the past and projected towards the future. It is incarnate, temporal, and transformative. It is both derived from and projected toward doing and knowing, toward learning and teaching in words and deeds. The postcolonial revalorization of the Good News through MTB-MC would lead to a greater appreciation of the varied formative and transformative studies, interests, and experiences of the indigenous practices as lived and learned by women and men in creative collaboration. In particular, this will allow the study of local culture's contribution to the Christian theological tradition to be extended beyond the studies of heretical, mystical, or devotional literature.

The postcolonial revalorization of the Good News through MTB-MC, as for the process of proclamation is courageous attempts to provide provisional expressions beyond the traditional colonial practice. Filipinos are encouraged to go out of their comfort zone and speak out their minds to confront the dominating attitude among traditional leaders who possess dominating and in most cases enslaving characters. Revalorization of the Good News through MTB-MC is an attempt to make visible, in words, deeds, and images, the invisible love of God, who in many ways was imprisoned an abandoned in the language of the dominant culture. It is the driving force of every faith-based communities while moving in the messiness of very different lives and languages outside the cloisters and the colonial universities.

The difficulty in finding a precise definition for the postcolonial revalorization of the Good News through MTB-MC is at its very heart because a leap of love towards the possibility to overcome conventional and colonial boundaries through collaborative conversation with another is its very nature and very strength. Doing the postcolonial revalorization of the Good News through MTB-MC takes the creative risk of a collaborative and liberative stance that the marginalized are bearers of the Good news. Their voices are languages of the proclamation of the Good News. Finally, MTB-MC preserves our linguistic and cultural diversity, and we, therefore, must encourage its

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[95] Rasiah S. Sugirtharajah, "A Brief Memorandum on Postcolonialism and Biblical Studies," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 21, no. 73 (1999): 3-5. https://doi.org/10.1177/0142064X9902107301

use because it is through the use of MTB-MC that emancipation from oppressive colonial practices may take place.

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Types of Communication Strategies in Jainism: A Study of Jain Mendicants, Educators and Lay Persons

Bhumi Shah

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to create understanding of communication strategies followed by Jain mendicants, educators, and lay persons. The second objective of the study is to see how ancient means of communication have been reformed in this digital generation. To achieve these purposes, research was carried out among Jain lay persons, educators and mendicants. The paper attempts further to understand how traditional methods of communication affect the understanding of Jain religion. It also elaborates and analyses various degrees of involvement and expectations of Jain lay persons and mendicants in the process of religious discourse. In doing so the paper would provide an in-depth debate and discussion about communication patterns and the actual impact to the original meaning of the religion. The study was carried out in the city of Ahmedabad India, where Jains are concentrated in urban settings. In-depth interviews were carried out as to understand different communication strategies followed by them.

Keywords: Jainism, Jain communication, digital communication, communication strategies

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Jainism as a Religion

Jainism originated in India around 6th century BCE, and is considered one of the oldest living ancient religions in the world. The term *Jain* means the devotee of *Jinas* (Spiritual Victors). *Jinas* are called so because they have won victory over passions of attachment and aversion that defile the soul. As a result, a Jain attains omniscience and supreme bliss. *Jinas* are enlightened human teachers, and are also called *Thirthankaras* (Ford-makers) whose words and teachings help living beings to cross the ocean of misery or transmigratory existence (Shah 2016). Jainism teaches that the way to liberation and bliss is to live lives of harmlessness and renunciation. The essence of Jainism is concern for the welfare of every being in the universe and for the health of the universe itself. Jains believe that animals and plants, as well as human beings, contain living souls. Each of these souls is considered of equal value and should be treated with respect and compassion. Jains are strict vegetarians and live in a way that minimises their use of the world's resources. They believe in reincarnation and seek to attain ultimate liberation, which means escaping the continuous cycle of birth, death and rebirth so that the immortal soul lives forever in a state of bliss. Liberation is achieved by eliminating all karma from the soul. As a religion of self-help, Jainism doesn't have gods or spiritual beings that will help human beings. Jain adherents, however, have the three guiding principles known as the 'three jewels'—right belief, right knowledge and right conduct. The supreme principle of Jain living is nonviolence (*ahimsa*), which constitutes one of the 5 *mahavratas* (the 5 great vows), the others being non-attachment to possessions, not lying, not stealing, and sexual restraint (with celibacy as the ideal). Mahavira is regarded as the man who gave Jainism its present-day form. The texts containing the teachings of Mahavira are called the *Agamas*. Its professional religious people are monks and nuns, who lead strict and ascetic lives. The process of becoming monks or nuns is called *Deeksha'* (BBC 2009).

Jainism and Digital Communication

Jainism made its appearance on new media around the end of 1994, bringing about the next major transition in religious communication of Jainism. Many believe that new media has become a boon for Jains all over the world. In the past, Jains, being a scattered and small population, had no centralized Jain community to support them. It seems that the new media has helped the Jain population to form communities in various parts of the world including within India, the homeland of Jainism itself. The Jains have adopted and embraced new media to increase their access to these religious sites of communication (Shah 2015).

In an interview, Dr. Bipin Joshi (Professor of Jain philosophy in Mumbai University) said that there used to be hardly 10-15 *deekshas* a year until a few years ago. However, in 2018 that number rose to 250, and in 2019, there were about 400 *deekshas*. Community leaders attribute the rise to three factors: growing disenchantment among the young with the pressures of a modern world; gurus of the faith adopting modern technology to make it easier for people to communicate religious ideas; and finally, a superstructure of religious retreats that allows young people to experiment with monastic life long before they choose to commit to it (Pathak 2019).

The number of activities on both Facebook pages under observation are not sufficient to demonstrate how new media promotes Jain religion. There are very few theological discussions on the Facebook pages, thus offering no space for community interactions. There is a complete lacuna of heuristic perspectives on communication of Jainism in new media. The expression of followers in new media is limited to only likes and shares for religious communication of Jainism. The followers of Jainism in social media still have not caught up with the concept of contextual theology with respect to the study of *Tirthankara* rather propositional truths established via tradition or sacred scripture, which are taken for granted. Communication of Jainism in new media can be

conceptualized as just transmission of religious knowledge, ideas, and information; it completely lacks Jain communal and meaning-making view of followers' interactions (Shah 2015).

Until 10 years ago, Jains relied on literature written in the ancient Indian languages of *Ardha Magadhi* or Sanskrit. Now, the religious literature is offered in many languages, especially English. Stories of the Jain religion are made into short films, which are shareable on social media. Reading a book may not be important but just seeing one small story in a minute or two would influence youngsters in significant ways. These videos, which are mostly circulated via WhatsApp messages, are well produced films which often glorify renunciation and sometimes even portray monks as superheroes. *Muni Jinvatsalya Vijay Maharajsaheb*, a Jain monk, says that over the last few years, films produced by Jain NGOs have played a critical role in making the religion accessible to young followers. He himself has published several YouTube videos that have had over a million views. "If one wants to reach youngsters, it is easier to go to where they are rather than to try and bring them here," he says. "YouTube was the best choice because that is where young people spend most of their time online" (Pathak 2019).

Major Sects in Jainism

Jainism is divided into two major schools of thoughts. *Svetambara* and *Digambara*. Although the core principles and philosophy are the same, these sects differ in their traditions and practices. The two main branches are further divided into sub-sects. The *Svetambara* and *Digambara* traditions have had historical differences ranging from their dress code, temples and iconography, attitude towards Jain nuns, their legends and the texts they consider as important (Dundad 2002). *Svetambara* is a term describing the aesthetics practice of wearing white clothes, which sets it apart from the *Digambara* whose ascetic practitioners go naked. Women are allowed to become nuns in *Svetambara* sects. Followers of this sect believe that women are

able to obtain *Moksha* as 19th *thirthankara Mallinath* was a woman. In *Digambara* sects, male monks go naked and female nuns wear traditional white Indian sari.

There are two major sub-sects in the *Svetambara* branch, which are *Deravasi (Murtipujak)* and *Sthanakvasi*. The *Sthanakvasi* group arose not directly from the *Shvetambaras* but as reformers of an older reforming sect. The main principle of this sect was not to practice idol-worship. Except on the crucial point of idol-worship, *Sthanakvasi* Jains do not differ significantly from other *Svetambara* Jains. However, nowadays Jains refer to themselves as *Svetambara Sthanakvasi*. There are differences between the *Sthanakvasi* and *Deravasi* in the observance in number of religious practices. *Sthanakvasi* Jains do not believe in idol-worship at all. As such they do not have temples but only prayer halls called *Sthankas* where they carry on their religious fasts, festivals, practices, prayers and discourses, etc.

The ascetics of the *Sthanakvasi* group cover their mouths with strips of cloth for the time and they do not use the cloth of yellow or any other colour. Moreover, the *Sthanakvasi* Jains admit the authenticity of only 32 of the scriptures of *Svetambaras* Jains. Furthermore, the *Sthanakvasi* Jains do not participate in the religious festivals (related to temples and idol worship) of *Murtipujak Svetambaras* (Dundad 2002). The sacred Jain texts are called *Agamas* and the religion is broken into sects that disagree over how many sacred texts there are. The *Sthanakvasi* recognize 33, the *Svetambara* believe 45 are true, and *Digambara* accept as many as 84 *Agamas*. The *Kalpa Sutra*, the Book of Ritual, which dates back to perhaps the 4th century BCE, is one of the most popular Jain texts. Among other things, it describes the lives of all 24 *tirthankaras* (Hays 2011).

Study

This study was carried out in the city of Ahmedabad, India—this being one of the largest business centres of the country as well as having

a diverse religious makeup, which has attracted many Jains. As such there is a great deal of social interaction with the Hindus in social, economic and religious domains of the city. The main objectives of the study are: (A) to understand and observe different activities carried out by Jain lay persons as per Jain *agamas*. (B) To study how ancient means of communication have been reformed in the digital generation. In-depth interviews of 12 Jain mendicants and 4 Jain educators were carried out to understand different methods followed by them to spread knowledge of Jainism. A keen observation and research was carried out by the researcher in order to have a better understanding of Jainism methods.

1.1 Theoretical Perspective of Communication and Jain Religion

Jainism has been in existence for over two and a half millennia. According to its self-understanding, it has existed exponentially longer still, and is in fact eternal. However, even considering the narrower time frame, the Jain traditions have seen, reacted to, and caused many changes in their external contexts and internal configurations (Tillo Detige 2016). "Lived religions" approaches reshaped Jainology over the last 30 years. Focusing on the practices, statements, texts and objects which Jains themselves use, scholars argue this approach better describes what it means to be Jain than studies which investigate doctrine, philosophy, etc. as found in canonical scriptures and intellectual works. Anthropological and historical studies of Jains sought to describe the Jain traditions in ways recognizable to Jains themselves. However, some groups of Jains express uneasiness about the state and nature of scholarship on their tradition, expressing a preference for scholars to study Jainism rather than Jains themselves (Vose 2017).

The Jain tradition has been passed on through multiple centuries since the last great teacher Mahavira who lived and taught in the 6th century BCE. Typically, Jainism is learned by taking part in religious actions, by interaction with ascetics, and by the telling and retelling of stories. Although Jain religious praxis is often conceptualized as very individual, these methods of learning are intensely interactive and social. In the past two decades Jainism has increasingly found its way online. Arguably, the social and performative aspects discussed above tend to be difficult to transfer to an online environment. Especially in the early days of the internet, text-based information, often simplified, was the most prevalent 'Jain' content online. This shift to a new media environment undoubtedly had an impact on what aspects of Jainism were emphasized, and on how the tradition was portrayed. However, recent years have seen the proliferation first of audio and video files, discussion boards, and more recently still of WhatsApp groups and live-streams. To a certain extent, these new developments have introduced the social aspects discussed above into online Jainism (Vekemans 2017).

In the broad range of communicative channels, story literature is one of the main ways to communicate a (religious) tradition, especially in the Indian context. Stories are told and retold to continue the tradition; they are also created and modified to convey certain changes within the tradition. Jainism has a vast array of narrative literature, as reflected by the sheer amount of manuscripts of narratives, in multiple languages and various formats. As is the perception in some scholarly research, these narratives were not just popular (and thus corrupt) means to teach certain doctrines and beliefs, they brought about religious experience on their own (Jonckheere 2017). In Jain monastic communities of the medieval period, there was a widespread practice of communicating using riddles. Leading Jain figures are frequently depicted in their hagiographies as versed in those charade-like plays with words, which are so refined that they can prompt the conversion of learned people from another religious tradition to Jainism. Riddles were also used in the letter of solicitation sent by one religious community to a renowned monk in order to invite him to stay in their community (Gorisse 2017).

The significance of Jain temples is partly linked to their inclusion on pilgrimage routes and in collections of temple. In the years 2001-2002, online sources were rare and most Jains used pilgrimage guidebooks, which were shared among relatives and friends. More recently, online pilgrimage information has come to serve that role. For well-established temples like *Shatrunjay,* inclusion in these online pilgrimage guidebooks is assumed. For the most central Jain pilgrimage sites, these marketing techniques are unnecessary; and if propagated as a direct link in a resort or tour company trying to catch one's attention, it is usually done in the most perfunctory manner. The negotiations happen at the peripheries where temples vie for inclusion in the collections and even for the status of *tirtha.* Pilgrimage sites with easily accessed information can be researched more quickly by those planning pilgrimages and thereby have increased likelihood being included. The use of websites for temples illustrates the negotiations of status claims by particular temples and part of the way temples crystallize or transform themselves through media (Kelting 2016).

Existing knowledge suggests different methods of following Jainism philosophy but its bifurcation on paper is still difficult. Daily practice of Jainism includes a variety of traditions and activities, which are implemented by Jain lay persons and for Jain mendicants. Even traditions and methods of doing and following certain rituals are different in *Svetambara* and *Digambara.* Today, in the age of great expansion in communication, especially in digital and social media platforms, communication has become easier and more convenient. Jainism can employ digital communication to propagate its set of routine activities that most Jains can follow to create better and deeper understanding of Jainism.

1.2 In-depth Interviews of Jain Mendicants

As mentioned above, Jainism is divided into two main schools, *Svetambara and Digamabara* with each school having its own

mendicants. In the *Svetambara* school, there are two major sub-sects, *Deravasi* and *Sthanakvasi.* There is another sub-sect called *Terapanth,* which historically was reformed from the group *Sthankavsi.* Their habits and traditions are the same as the *Sthankvasi* sub-sect. Therefore, *Terapanth* has not been considered for the purpose of this study. Male mendicants are called *sadhu* and female mendicants are called *sadhvi.* A total of 12 mendicants were taken from the *Svetambara* sect for the purpose of understanding about communication pattern followed in different sects. Each mendicant was asked to respond to a list of questions, and their answers were analysed. In the case of mendicants from the *Digambara* sect, because it was difficult to meet these mendicants, four expert Jain educators were enlisted to gain better and deeper understanding of this sect.

Bifurcation of Jain mendicants into groups

Sects	Male mendicants	Female mendicants
Dearavasi	3	3
Sthanakvasi	2	4
Digamabara	1 (Jain Educator)	3 (Educator)

The first question posed to each mendicants was: **What kind of activities should a Jain person do in his/her daily life, and why are these activities important?**

According to *Deravasi* sect which believes in *'murtipuja'* and Jain temple, any activities which helps to focus one's senses on *'Moksha'* (liberation of the soul from birth and re-birth) are good to do on a daily basis. They believe *Murti* (sculpture of *thirthankaras*) has the power to maintain faith in a person. The daily practice *'Seva-pooja'* can help one to take control of one's soul and senses. In addition, the habit of daily visits to Jain temple is one of the ways to sustain oneself as a Jain follower. Along with Jain temple rituals, there are certain methods and customs which every Jain can follow for self-betterment. Different *Acharyas* (Supreme mendicant) have made a list

of what to do and what not to do for their following Jain *sadhu* and *sadhvijies.* To become a Jain lay person, it is of utmost importance to understand '*Ahinsa parmo dharma*' (non-violence), and carry out one's routine activities in such a way that are in accordance with this ideal.

In their response, *Sthankvasi* mendicants give greater importance to knowledge than activities and they firmly believe that every Jain person should have knowledge before doing any activity. Listening to *pravachan*, or lectures given by *sthankvasi* mendicants are said to be the most preferred thing to do by a Jain lay person. Transformation through pure knowledge of Jain philosophy is the first step to awaken one's soul from past impurities. Story telling is one the famous form of communication, included in *Pravachan. Sthankvasi* mendicants put a square white cloth attached with cotton strings called '*Muhupatti*' on their mouth and wear pure white clothes. Unlike *Deravasi* mendicants, they do not believe in sculpture *(MurtiPuja).* Instead of temples, *Sthankvasi* mendicants have *upasaray*, or prayer halls where all mendicants stay for a certain period of time, and that is the only religious place for members of the *Sthankvasi* sect. By all means they want to follow the way suggested by the *thirthankaras,* but not at the cost of causing any harm to other living things. *Sthankvasi* mendicants believe that the universe is full of living creatures of six senses, and one should do the utmost to not harm any of them, not even in the name of doing a Jain activity. Because of this outlook, they restrict themselves and their followers from any kind of celebration as such activities can cause harm to other creatures.

Digambara mendicants, whose philosophy of following tradition is said to be the oldest, give priority to the virtues of non-attachment and non-possession of material goods. *Digambara* monks neither have any clothes nor any begging bowl. They traditionally stay naked, travelling and receiving donated food in their palms. The monks carry a *picchi* (community owned), which is a broom made up of fallen peacock feathers for removing and thus saving the life of

insects in their path or before they sit. They drink from the gourd which is used to contain pure, sterilized water. *Digambara* monks believe that the words of Mahavira neither survived nor could be recorded. As a Jain follower or a believer in Jain philosophy, one must try to follow or maintain the lifestyle exemplified by Mahavira. The lifestyle and behaviour of the *Digambara* monk is guided by a '*Mulachara,*' which delineates 28 primary attributes for the monk. Female monastics in the *Digambara* tradition known as *aryikas*, unlike their male counterparts, wear clothes. Given their commitment to non-attachment and non-possession, the *Digambara* tradition holds that women who retain their clothes, cannot attain salvation (*moksha*) as men can, and the best a nun can achieve is to be reborn as a man in the next rebirth. Because of this discrepancy, monks are held to be of higher status than nuns in *Digambara* monasteries. From the *Digambara* monk's perspective, both *Digambara* nuns and *Svetambara* monastic community can be seen simply as more pious Jain laypeople who do not or are unable to fully practice the Jain monastic vows (Dundad 2002). *Digambara* temples have naked sculptures of all the *thirthankaras.* In this sect, women are not allowed to touch any sculpture, whereas men can do *seva-puja* (a method of worship).

Following is a list of activities that suggest different types of communication. Through the researcher's detailed observation and in-depth conversation with mendicants and nuns from all sects, an attempt has been made to understand the bifurcation of different activities followed in the three sects of Jainism. The given names of activities are in Jain *prakrit* or Sanskrit language. Some words are written in the same manner as the way it is pronounced. It is difficult to translate every term into English as the actual meaning would be obscured in the process of translation. The researcher has tried to include every activity−that was mentioned by mendicants and observed by Jain educators. Nevertheless, it remains a huge area of research as Jainism has deep connection with spiritual communication and methods are varied from sect to sect.

1.3 Self communication activities

Activities	Deravasi	Sthanakvasi	Digambara
Samayik	✓	✓	✓
Pratikaman	✓	✓	✓
Upvas	✓	✓	✓
Seva-Pooja	✓	✗	✓
Aarti	✓	✗	✓
Mangal Diva	✓	✗	
Gauli	✓	✗	
chanting	✓	✗	✓
Reading Jain literature	✓	✓	✓

These activities are suggested in ancient literature of Jainism. Jainism focuses on self-communication. It is considered as a meditation practice and beneficial towards achieving mental peace and social harmony. Any Jain believer can do these activities in their daily life. Methods of doing these activities are different among the three sects. Formal education and knowledge is required before doing these activities. All mendicants agreed that every Jain family should pass the heritage of Jain values to their children as education in the Jain method needs to begin in childhood. The *Deravasi* sect follows the practice of *Murti-Pooja*, and thus incorporates temple ceremonies into its routine activities. The *Digamabara* sect follows strict rules for fasting, in which a person is allowed to have water intake only once during the daytime. On the other hand, the members of the *Sthankavasi* and *Deravasi* sects insist on consuming only boiled water; however, there is no drinking limit during the daytime. In Jainism, the practice of *'chauvihar'* in which water and food should not be taken after sunset is normative. Fellow Jains tend to follow these activities as regularly and strictly as possible. Mendicants from all three sects view their own methods as more appropriate than others. All claimed that they tried to carry out these activities in accordance with what is mentioned

in the ancient *Aagamas*. Surprisingly, the actual meaning of all self-communication activities remains same; however, the sects have devised different communication methods to conduct these activities. While the *Sthankvasi* sect does not allow for any temple ceremonies, the *Deravasi* sect firmly believes in temple ceremonies for self-communication.

1.4 Group communication activities

Activities	Deravasi	Sthanakvasi	Digambara
Pravachan	✓	✓	✓
Pathshala for children	✓	✓	✓
Pathshala for elders	✓	✓	✓
Group fasting ceremonies	✓	✓	✗
Jatra (sangh)	✓	✓	✓
Pratishtha Mahotsav	✓		✓
All kinds of Poojans	✓		✓
Prabhavana (gift)	✓	✓	✓
Diksha Mahotsav	✓	✓	✓
Religious Exams	✓	✓	✓
Dhaja Mahotsav	✓		✓
Seminars	✓	✓	✓
Navvanu Jatra	✓		✗
Community get to gather	✓	✓	✓
Navdha Bhakti	✗	✗	✓
Guru Aarti	✗	✗	✓
Chauka	✗	✗	✓

All these activities are done in group. According to the mendicants, Jain persons should participate in these activities on a frequent basis. In addition to spiritual benefits deriving from engaging

in group activities, there are social benefits as well. Although most of these activities are conducted with the help of mendicants, there is also significant support from managing and financial teams in carrying out the ceremonies. Because the mendicants feel that bigger ceremonies are of greater benefit for Jain society, they try to make these events as big as they can with the assistance of regular Jain followers. In these ceremonies there is difference of opinions among the three sects. *Sthankvasi* mendicants do not demand to conduct the activities because they believe in the importance of self-engagement by Jain followers. On the other hand, *Deravasi* mendicants ask their followers to conduct group activities on a regular basis because they believe in discipline and regularity. Method of conducting activities varies from sect to sect. Uses of digital technology for religious communication is debatable among mendicants of three sects. All mendicants from *Sthankvasi* sect agreed that they do not ask or demand the use of modern technology for any religious activities. The *Deravasi* sect, however, is more active on social media compared to other sects. Mendicants of the *Deravasi* sect believe that if people can use social media for entertainment, then using it for gaining religious knowledge is more beneficial. The *Digambara* sect allows its followers to use social media for promotional activities.

1.5 Different forms of expression

Activities	Deravasi	Sthankvasi	Digambara
Bhavna (musical event)	✓	✗	✓
Dance	✓	✗	✓
Drama	✓	✓	✓
Rangoli (drawing through sand colours)	✓	✗	✓
Paintings	✓	✓	✓
Story telling	✓	✓	✓

Aangi (sculpture decoration)	✓	✗	✗
Special clothes for Seva-Pooja	✓	✗	✓
Posters	✓	✓	✓
Bill-board	✓	✓	✓
Charity Box	✓	✓	✓
Flower decoration	✓	✗	✗
Gave decoration	✓	✗	✗
Vaksaksepa	✓	✗	✗
Kesar chandan tika	✓	✗	✓

The traditional form of communication is very common in Jainism. Celebration as well as the method of celebration are not uniform among the three sects. According to the *Sthanakvasi* sect, any form of celebration which includes electronic energy involvement should not be allowed as per Jain ethics. This means gadgets such as light, camera, fan, microphone, and even mobile phones are not allowed in religious ceremonies. According to *Sthanakvasi* mendicants, non-visible airborne creatures are also living creatures. Jain philosophy and ethics are very deep rooted in the way of nonviolence. Therefore, Jains should not perform any activities where living creatures could be harmed since this is also considered as violence. The *Deravasi* sect believes that celebrations can maintain connection with religious ethics. Therefore, doing it on frequent basis will help a person to have faith in Jainism. In the *Digambara* sect, because women are not allowed to touch any sculpture, special clothes are made only for men to do *seva-puja*.

1.6 Written form of communication

Activities	Deravasi	Sthanakvasi	Digambara
Community magazine	✓	✓	✓

Article in newspaper	✓	✓	✓
Jain calendar	✓	✓	✓
Invitation cards for religious ceremonies	✓	✓	✓
All kind of books	✓	✓	✓
Letters	✓	✓	✓
Bulletin	✓	✓	✓

Although written forms of communication are the same for all three sects, content is different. Jain religion has its own calendar which is normally observed by Jain adherents. According to Jain mendicants, even in the Jain calendar there are different patterns that are followed by each of the three sects. Religious ceremonies, festivals and traditions are arranged in accordance with each sect's own system. Content of books and letters differ among the three sects. Because the sects do not agree on the same annual religious calendar, the biggest Jain festival of *'Paryushan'* starts and ends on different dates depending on who is celebrating the event. The *Sthankvasi* and *Deravasi* sects celebrate the festival for eight days whereas the *Digambara* celebrates for ten days. Fasting ceremonies and temple ceremonies are decided in accordance of each sect's calendar. So, for every Jain follower it is mandatory to know their sect's calendar if they want to participate in any religious activity. Therefore, these written form of communication is important to get accurate information of a particular sect.

2.1 Communication Perspective Through Digital Platforms

The second objective is to examine how an ancient mean of communication has been reformed in the digital age. Through close observation and study of available data, the researcher tried to establish a list of different methods of communication which are available on the digital platform. Based on information gathered from interviews with Jain mendicants, any method which makes use of electronic connection

is not recommended. However, changing social contexts demands that digitalization must be employed to preserve knowledge and to disseminate it to other parts of the world. Fifty Jain lay people, selected by random stratified sampling were asked to share their views about religion and its communication by digital technology. All respondents are above 18 years of age and are active followers of Jainism in their respective sects as demonstrated in their temple attendance. The responses compiled are presented in the table below.

Questions	Yes	No
Do you have religious WhatsApp groups?	65%	35%
Do you watch YouTube videos for any religious ceremonies?	40%	60%
Do you follow community pages on Facebook?	10%	90%
Do you watch TV channels related to Jainism content?	36%	64%

A content analysis has been carried out by the researcher to understand the presence of Jain literature and its communication available on different digital platforms. Research indicates that there is presence of community pages, groups, videos and pictures available on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. There are five television channels which telecast Jain religious content, specifically, *Jinvani, Arihant, Sanskar, Astha,* and *Jain TV*. Here, the researcher tried to bifurcate communication methods which are available on different digital media platforms. It is important to ask the question of whether traditional means of communication adapted to digital media is in accordance with Jain philosophy. For better understanding, the question of the proper way to communicate Jainism to the modern day digital generation was directed to Jain mendicants. The responses received from the mendicants are as follows:

According to *sthankvasi* mendicant *aacharya (supreme monk) dariyapuri aanth koti maharasaheb pujya Virendramuni gurudev,* in following Jain religion and philosophy, foremost, it is important to have knowledge. He insists that proper knowledge is the way to help a person attain pure emotions towards Jainism. The decision from the heart to follow Jainism allows one to engage in the prescribed routine activities of Jainism with a deeper commitment. In the present era, ethical practices for adherents of Jainism vary from person to person. For a Jain lay person, there is a lot of flexibility in what they can do, but as leaders charged with maintaining the heritage of Jain religion, mendicants must follow strict rules.

The mendicant *Param pujya Deravasi sadhviji sheelratna* said, "In Jainism activism is not important, but influence is. Influence comes with strong thoughts. As mendicants, we must be a great influencer of our religion. It is our primary duty to spread pure knowledge of Jainism to Jain lay persons. At its core, Jainism does not believe in self-promotion. Hence, digital promotion or any activity is not allowed according to Jainism. Jainism demands hardship in worshiping god. Today's generation is smart. They want everything to be easily available and near to them. Through social media it is easy to get, share and spread knowledge as well as information with each other. Jain lay persons are followers but not influencers. They can be active on social media to maintain group or community."

Here, the researcher tried to observe methods of communication, which once were only found in written format in print, but are now available in digital platform. It is difficult to say that every Jain literature is available online. Because, religious communication is still following very ancient tradition. Earlier in this paper, we bifurcated activities according to sect, now will see which activities are available online. TV and social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook and YouTube are major instruments employed in Jain communication.

Activities	Available on Television channel	Available on Whatsapp/ Facebook/YouTube
Samayik	No	Yes
Pratikaman	No	Yes
Different form of Fasting	No	No
Seva-Pooja	No	Yes
Aarti	Yes	Yes
Mangal Diva	Yes	Yes
Gauli	No	Yes
chanting	Yes	Yes
Jain literature	Yes	Yes
Pravachan	Yes	Yes
Pathshala for children	No	Yes
Pathshala for elders	No	Yes
Group fasting ceremonies	Yes	Yes
Jatra (sangh)	No	Yes
Pratishtha Mahotsav	Yes	Yes
All kinds of Poojans	No	Yes
Diksha Mahotsav	Yes	Yes
Religious Exams	No	Yes
Dhaja Mahotsav	Yes	Yes
Seminars	Yes	Yes
Navvanu Jatra	No	No
Community get to gather	No	Yes

Navdha Bhakti	No	Yes
Guru Aarti	Yes	Yes
Chauka	No	No
Bhavna (musical event)	Yes	Yes
Rangoli (drawing through sand colors)	No	Yes
Story telling	Yes	Yes
Aangi (sculpture decoration)	Yes	Yes
Special clothes for Seva-Pooja	No	No
Charity Box	No	Yes
Flower decoration	No	Yes
Gave decoration	No	Yes
Vaksaksepa	No	No
Community Magazine	No	Yes
Kesar chandan tika	No	No
Jain Calendar	No	Yes
Invitation cards	No	Yes

Explanation of table:

Religious activities mention in the table suggest that digital social media platforms like YouTube, Facebook and WhatsApp are more informative to the Jain community. Television has very limited content about Jain religion. Only group activities like ritual celebrations and festivals which can be recorded are telecast on TV. In addition, lecture or seminars given by Jain monks and only some temple ceremonies are telecast on TV. Television helps to publicize important occasions but cannot provide extensive education and guidance on a personal level.

Digital platforms can help people to understand methods and how to conduct activities to nourish their spiritual life. Because the Internet is cheap and highly accessible, Internet usage is much higher than that of television. The results of the survey as reflected in the table suggest that in the modern era, TV as a tool of communication for Jain religion is not as successful as digital platforms.

Conclusion

In this paper, the method of bifurcation was used to gain understanding in how different Jain sects respond to digital technology in the effort to maintain the vanishing religious traditions. Jain literature is available in Google search but it cannot serve its full purpose. To gain pure and accurate knowledge of Jainism, one must attach himself or herself with face to face communication with mendicants. Jainism emphasizes the way to live a human life. Thus, the digital age can only promote activities but cannot signify its full purpose. For distance communication, it is good to have use of digital platforms for information and knowledge but rituals and traditions demands that certain ways which have been passed down through history be followed. Hence, digital and social media can act as a supportive tool of communication but Jain religion still demands personal contact. Jain religion focuses on salvation and its calls for a certain way of life in order to make deeds done by the individual in the past vanish. Self-focus is mandatory in Jainism. Therefore, meditation and positivity are part of Jain traditions.

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Explanation of Jain terms

1. **Samayik:** A48-minute process of meditation, including religious methods. It is also considered as self-observation process. Sects have different methods to do it on regular basis. However, the meaning of *Samayik* remains same. One has to learn the method before doing it.
2. **Pratikaman:** A ritual which Jains repent for their sins and non-meritorious activities committed knowingly or inadvertently in their daily life, in speech or action. It is conducted twice a day in the *Svetambara* sect and four times a day in the *Digambar*a sect.
3. **Upvas:** A process of fasting in which no food is taken for the whole day, starting from previous sunset to the second sunrise. It takes approximately 36 hours. Boiled water is allowed to drink during sunrise time to sunset.
4. **Sevapooja:** Involves entering and leaving Jain temple. It is a spiritual ritual which suggests a baby step towards salvation. It has a particular

method and it can only be done in clean clothes. Jain people feel mental harmony during this process. It can be done on a regular basis.

5. **Aarti:** A religious ritual in which flame is offered to the sculpture of *thirthankaras* while singing traditional songs in local languages.

6. **Mangal Diva:** A ritual of waving a lamp in rotational manner in front of icons. This is similar to a ritual in the Hindu tradition.

7. **Guali:** A ritual done in front of *thirtankaras* sculpture. Basic fundamental of the action is to give away what one has, and therefore creates a habit of non-attachment to things which are necessary in daily life. People give away food while doing *guali*.

8. **Pravachan:** An inspirational lecture or talk given by Jain monks on regular basis.

9. **Pathshala:** A Jain school for children where knowledge of Jainism is been given to them.

10. **Mandal:** A weekly gathering of women to conduct religious activities.

11. **Group fasting ceremonies:** Different types of fasting done by particular groups of people and led by the supreme monk.

12. **Jatra (Sangh):** A group of people walking together at a specific place or Jain temple to conduct religious ceremonies.

13. **Pratistha Mahotsav:** An opening ceremony for *thirthankar's* sculpture in Jain temple.

14. **Poojan-** A form of worshiping *thirthankars* to ask for intentions.

15. **Prabhavna:** A gift sponsored by Jain follower to people who attend religious ceremonies.

16. **Diksha Mahotsav:** A ceremony in which a Jain follower becomes a monk. It is an important event of one's life, and many people are invited to attend the ceremony.

17. **Religious exams:** Exams given to Jain adherents.

18. **Dhaja Mahotsav:** A ceremony to change flag of the Jain temple every year. It is a big event for the Jain community.

19. **Navvanu Jatra-** *Palitana* Mountain located in Gujarat, India is considered as holly place in Jainism. Traditional way of doing *Navvanu Jatra* is to climb up mountain 99 times within certain period of time, approximately in one and half month.

20. **Navdha Bhakti -** A procedure of offering food to a *Digambara* Jain monk.

21. **Guru Aarti:** A way to display respect a monk by lighting up a flame in front of him.

22. **Chauka:** Place where food preparation takes place for the purpose of serving the *Digambara* monk.

23. **Vaksaksepa:** Blessings given by Jain monk. It is a powder form of precious stones which the Jain monk sprinkles on top of the head of a lay person.

Communicating Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life: Christology for the 21st Century Filipinos

Frederick F. Prevosa

ABSTRACT

Christology is a theological reflection focused on the identity of Jesus and his impact on people. It starts with the people's experience of Jesus and how they interpret the meaning of that experience in their particular context. Christology is not simply a theological discourse but a challenge to discipleship – how his followers would live their lives after their experience of and reflection on him. The diversities of temporal, spatial and cultural conditions play important role in this process, and for this reason, one's reflection on the identity and meaning of

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Jesus may change as one's context also changes. This paper is situated in the context of the 21st century Philippines, a Christian majority country in Asia which tries to cope with the impacts of the 21st century technological advancements and the disarray in its social, economic and political landscape. This paper focuses on how Jesus can be viewed by Filipinos in the 21st century and how their faith in him can be a powerful tool in combatting the prevailing "culture of disinformation" and "culture of fear, violence and death" in their society today. This highlights Jesus Christ the Way, the Truth and the Life as an inspiration and model in seeking and proclaiming the truth over "fake news" or disinformation, and respecting human life and human dignity over terror, violence and killing. This paper also gazes upon Jesus Christ the Way, the Truth and the Life as a catalyst for personal, social and political renewal, and the revival of some of the excellent Filipino and Christian values like *bayanihan* (cooperation), *pagkakaisa* (solidarity), *pagmamalasakit* (concern)*, pakikiramay* (empathy). Although this reflection takes on the Christian point of view, this paper calls for a collective response since the evils the "culture of disinformation" and the "culture of fear, violence and death" bring affects all Filipinos regardless of gender, social status, economic condition, political leaning, and religious affiliation. Besides, truthfulness and respect for human life and human dignity are universal values that go beyond the confines of Christianity and are shared by all religious traditions. Who is Jesus Christ for the 21st century Filipinos barraged with disinformation and endangered with fear, violence and death? Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Keywords: Christology, Way, Truth, Life, 21st century Filipinos, culture of disinformation, culture of fear, violence and death

Introduction

The 21st century is characterized by advancements in science and communications technology, demands for collaboration and innovation,

sophistications in people's lifestyle and outlook towards themselves and the world. On one hand, these developments have produced numerous benefits for the good of humanity. On the other, they have also overwhelmed people leaving those unable to cope anxious or even lost. Technology can be used irresponsibly to manipulate and oppress people, most especially the powerless. Problems arising from unwise use of technology are faced by many countries, including the Philippines.

For these past centuries, Christianity and Christian values have developed a symbiotic relationship with indigenous Filipino values to keep the country intact and vibrant. In the advent of the 21st century, however, one could witness a paradigm shift in the way Filipinos think and behave, affecting some of Filipino people's treasured values like *bayanihan* (cooperation), *pagkakaisa* (solidarity), *pagmamalasakit* (concern)*, pakikiramay* (empathy), value for truth, and value for life. With the rapid changes plus the present turmoil in the country's political, economic, and social landscape, the question of the relevance of the Christian faith, of Jesus Christ for Filipinos today, needs to be actively addressed.

Christology in Christian theology is a process of interpreting one's faith-experience of God in and through Jesus Christ.[1] Culture or context plays a very important role in this process since the person of Jesus and his salvation can only be understandable and relevant to people in their own context.[2] How do Filipinos experience Jesus this 21st century amidst the rapid changes in the social and communication technology and the economic, social and political problems they face? This is the question that this papers hopes to answer. One approach in doing Christology is to look at Jesus' liberative actions,

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[1] Gerarad H. Luttenberger, *An Introduction to Christology: In the Gospels and Early Church* (USA: Twenty-Third Publications, 1998), 12.

[2] Jose M. de Mesa, "Making Salvation Concrete and Jesus Real Trends in Asian Christology," *Exchange* 30, no.1 (2001): 1, accessed June 6, 2019, DOI:10.1163/157254301x00011.

which is an essential part of what is known as Liberation Christology. Liberation Christology presents Jesus as the champion of the poor and the oppressed, reacting and fighting against the atrocities brought about by unjust economic, political, ideological and even religious authorities.[3] This paper will employ this category of Christology in its considerations on the contemporary milieu in the Philippines.

Alarming Phenomena in the Philippines Today

Science and technology serve as key players in the 21st century, creating big impact in the alterations of behaviour patterns, emergence of new cultural values and the reframing the structure of society.[4] The revolution in knowledge and the changes in the way people think and behave constitute an essential role either in the building or in the disintegrating of a society. The 21st century developments remain a marvellous expression of humanity's brilliance and can contribute innumerable benefits to human society. However, it cannot be denied that although they are great forces for good, the negative impacts can be very damaging should they fall into the hands of irresponsible individuals who will manipulate them for their selfish political, economic and ideological interests. Looking at the global situation, it can be seen that these negative impacts are no longer hypothetical or simply paranoia, but have become reality in many countries, including the Philippines. In the case of the Philippines, aside from the deeply-rooted problem of poverty and graft and corruption in the government, two alarming phenomena presently serve as great cause for anxiety for the well-being of Filipinos today – the emergence of the "culture of disinformation" and the prevalence of the "culture of fear, violence and death."

"Culture of Disinformation"

Philippines has welcomed the digital age and is considered as one of the world's top social media users. Based on the 2019 digital report Facebook remains the most active social media platform, followed by YouTube, then messaging apps like WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger, then Instagram and Twitter.[5] These social media platforms, however, have been used as venues to disseminate "fake news" or disinformation. Fake news is defined as **news, stories or hoaxes created to deliberately deceive readers,** influence people's views, push a political agenda or cause confusion which can often be profitable for online publishers.[6] Fake news has been categorized into two types: misinformation and disinformation. Misinformation is false information which is unintentionally disseminated online, meaning without propaganda or political aims and intentions. Disinformation, on the other hand, is intended to convince online users to favour the political perspective of a group or individual, and its propagation is often times systematically orchestrated and funded.[7]

In their study of the production of fake news and political trolling in the Philippines, Jonathan Corpus Ong and Jason Vincent Cabanes found out that disinformation has increasingly become more imbedded into the political system.[8] Jonathan Corpus Ong, Ross

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[3] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *Scripture and Christology: A Statement of the Biblical Commission with a Commentary* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), 86.

[4] Mohammad Taghi Sheykhi, "Science and Technology as the Inevitable Necessity of Man's Development in the 21st Century," *The Anthropologist* 4, no.4 (2002): 227, accessed December 10, 2019, DOI:10.1080/09720073.2002.11890747.

[5] Simon Kemp, "Digital 2019: Global Digital Overview," *DataReportal*, January 31, 2019, accessed December 10, 2019, https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2019-global-digital-overview.

[6] PDST Technology in Education, "What is False Information (Fake News)?" *Webwise.ie,* accessed December 20, 2019, https://www.webwise.ie/teachers/what-is-fake-news/.

[7] Khalil Ismael Michael G. Quilinguing, "The problem with fake news: UP experts speak on the impact of disinformation on politics, society and democracy," *University of the Philippines Website,* September 28, 2019, accessed December 20, 2019, https://www.up.edu.ph/index.php/the-problem-with-fake-news-up-experts-speak-on-the-impact-of-disinformation-on-politics-society-and-democracy/.

[8] Jonathan Corpus Ong & Jason Vincent A. Cabañes, *Politics and Profit in the Fake News Factory: Four Work Models of Political Trolling in the Philippines* (NATO Strategic Communications Center of Excellence, 2019), 4.

Tapsell and Nicole Curato, in their Digital Disinformation Tracker project, discovered that during the 2019 Philippine Mid-term election, the political candidates of both the administration and the opposition mobilized their trolls or click armies to insinuate and disseminate fake news through conspiratorial YouTube channels and Facebook closed groups.[9] This tactic had a great impact on the result of the election and the trend in Philippine politics as a whole.

The Philippine government has often denied its participation in the production and dissemination of any fake news. Nonetheless, a fact check conducted by Rappler, one of the outspoken media outlets in the country, shows that some government officials became and continue to become purveyors of disinformation. For example, in 2016, President Rodrigo Duterte's campaign spokesperson who later was appointed as the head of the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), Peter Laviña, attacked the critics of the administration's "war on drugs" through a post about a 9-year-old Filipina who was raped and murdered. The post was accompanied by a photo which turned out not to be of the girl in the story but of someone else in Brazil where the photo was taken.[10] Another is the former Assistant Secretary of the Presidential Commission Operations Office (PCOO) and now the Deputy Executive Director of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), Mocha Uson, who was tagged by netizens as "Queen of Fake News" because of the numerous misleading information and false reports she shared on her social media accounts.[11] In 2017, she rallied support for Filipino troops fighting against terrorists in Mindanao through a post. Same with Laviña, she

accompanied her post with a photo; but instead of Filipino soldiers, she made use of a photo of Honduran police praying.[12]

The examples cited above are just a few of the tremendous amount of disinformation that Filipinos have to deal with every day, if not every hour or minute. The new and powerful technology of the 21st century makes the fabrication of disinformation simple, and its spread – orchestrated by ill-motivated individuals and groups – easy as they are shared by the uncritical publics. Should this culture of disinformation continue, truth will not be the only thing that will be compromised but the dignity and lives of peoples as well.

"Culture of Fear, Violence and Death"

Under the Duterte administration, thousands of Filipinos have been killed and many more live in fear because of the country's violent "war on drugs".[13] The exact number of casualties of the drug war and the victims of extrajudicial killing is difficult to ascertain. According to the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), 4,948 suspected drug users and dealers died during police operations from July 2016 to September 2018.[14] This, however, excludes thousands of other individuals killed by unidentified vigilante groups. According to the Philippine National Police (PNP), there are still 22,983 deaths that are classified as "homicides under investigation".[15] In his 2018 State of the Nation Address (SONA), the President said that the war against

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[9] Jonathan Corpus Ong, Ross Tapsell & Nicole Curato. *Tracking Digital Disinformation in the 2019 Philippine Midterm Election* (New Mandala, 2019), 7-8.

[10] Maria A. Ressa, "Propaganda war: Weaponizing the internet," *Rappler,* October 3, 2016, updated February 7, 2019, accessed December 30, 2019, https://www.rappler.com/nation/148007-propaganda-war-weaponizing-internet.

[11] Vernise L. Tantuco, "FALSE: Mocha Uson says she 'does not spread fake news'," *Rappler,* October 6, 2018, accessed December 10, 2019, https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/fact-check/213594-false-mocha-uson-does-not-spread-fake-news.

[12] Stacy de Jesus, "FACT CHECK: PCOO's Mocha Uson shares wrong photo of PH army," *Rappler,* May 30, 2017, accessed December 15, 2019, https://www.rappler.com/technology/social-media/171343-pcoo-asec-mocha-uson-wrong-image-ph-army.

[13] Jamela Alindogan, "Fear and killings on the rise in Duterte's war on drugs," *Aljazeera*, November 10, 2018, accessed December 15, 2019, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/11/fear-killings-rise-dutertes-war-drugs-181110145609076.html.

[14] "Philippines: Events of 2018," *Human Rights Watch,* accessed December 15, 2019, https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/philippines.

[15] Ibid.

illegal drugs is far from over. That is why the "war on drugs" will not be sidelined; instead, it will be as relentless and chilling as the day it began.[16] Evidently, the death toll rises every day, mostly among the poor and small time pushers and users who become prey in the administration's campaign. The big personalities behind the drug syndicates, however, remain on the loose.

Aside from the war on drugs and extrajudicial killings, the killings of farmers tagged as members or sympathizers of communist groups in the rural areas have been rapidly increasing all over the country.[17] In March 2019, fourteen farmers suspected to be members and sympathizers of New People's Army were killed in Negros Oriental. Police report says that they were allegedly killed while fighting back against police officers who served warrants before dawn.[18] Unyon ng Manggagawa sa Agrikultura (UMA), however, questioned the time the warrant was served and why the police were wearing facemasks and other paraphernalia in order to conceal their identities.[19]

There are also pending bills at the Philippine Congress and the Philippine Senate lowering the age of criminal liability of children and reviving capital punishment or the death penalty. Both bills were received with strong criticisms by human rights and child welfare advocates who say that lowering the age of criminal responsibility constitutes an act of violence against children who themselves are also victims of poverty and exploitation by adult crime syndicates.[20] Although the President mentioned during his 2018 SONA that the death penalty was necessary to deter crimes related to drugs and plunder, human rights advocates pointed out the absence of a scientific basis proving that indeed death penalty would contribute to lowering crimes and bringing about economic progress.[21] They also argued that the mere fact that the Philippine justice system does not treat the poor fairly and justly is more than enough reason to oppose death penalty's revival.

Alarmed with what is happening in the country, human rights advocates, international bodies, politicians, militant group and Church officials decry the rampant human rights abuses. The government, however, pays deaf ears to the criticisms. Instead its alleged response is to intimidate and silence its critics and those who oppose its policies. It places heavy hand on media outlets, individuals and institutions that are critical to the government's questionable political agenda. The President himself continue to curse the Catholic Church[22] and even commented that bishops should be "killed" for supposedly doing nothing but criticize his administration.[23] Some bishops, priests and religious have even been charged with criminal offences for alleged

[16] Rodrigo R. Duterte, "Third State of the Nation Address," *Official Gazette,* July 23, 2018, accessed December 15, 2019, https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2018/07/23/rodrigo-roa-duterte-third-state-of-the-nation-address-july-23-2018/.

[17] Tony Katigbak, "Killings of farmers on the rise under Duterte," *Philippine Star,* July 21, 2017, accessed December 15, 2019, https://www.philstar.com/other-sections/news-feature/2017/07/21/1719953/killings-farmers-rise-under-duterte.

[18] Kristine Joy Patag, "14 farmers latest in killings of 'red-tagged' personalities in Negros — group," *Philippine Star,* April 2, 2019, accessed December 15, 2019, https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2019/04/02/1906710/14-farmers-latest-killings-red tagged personalities-negros-group.

[19] "Killing of 14 Negros farmers," *Philippine Star,* April 10, 2019, accessed December 15, 2019, https://www.philstar.com/happens/629.

[20] Lotta Sylwander, "Lowering the age of criminal responsibility is against child rights: UNICEF," *UNICEF Philippines*, January 18, 2019, accessed December 15, 2019, https://www.unicef.org/philippines/press-releases/lowering-age-criminal-responsibility-against-child-rights-unicef.

[21] Jodesz Gavilan, "CHR: Reviving death penalty will lead to cycle of violence in PH," *Rappler,* October 10, 2019, accessed December 15, 2019, https://www.rappler.com/nation/242197-chr-reviving-death-penalty-lead-cycle-violence-philippines.

[22] Romulo G. Valles, D.D., "Conquering Evil with Good," *CBCP Online,* January 28, 2019, accessed December 20, 2019, http://cbcponline.net/conquering-evil-with-good/.

[23] Pia Ranada, "'Kill bishops, all they do is criticize,' says Duterte," *Rappler,* December 6, 2018, accessed December 20, 2019, https://www.rappler.com/nation/218312-duterte-says-kill-bishops-all-they-do-is-criticize.

sedition, cyber libel, libel and obstruction of justice.[24] All of these alleged moves to intimidate and silence critics are being denied by the government.

Unfortunately, despite the prevalence of violence and abuses, many Filipinos continue to remain ambivalent and choose to remain silent and indifferent. There are some prophetic voices coming out but only few would take heed. This reality has been pointed out by the bishops who said that an even greater cause of alarm is the indifference of many to the wrongs happening before them. The killings and abuses seem to be considered as normal, and even worse, something that, according to the supporters of the government, have to be done.[25]

To whom shall we go?

Based on what has been presented above, it can be concluded that the present situation is very challenging for Filipinos. It is not easy to trace the exact path that has taken Filipino society to the present state. We can either say that the irresponsible use of 21st century technology coupled with social, economic and political turmoil fuelled the emergence and prevalence of the "culture of disinformation" and the "culture of fear, violence and death," or perhaps it is the other way around. Faced with difficulties, it is very easy to accept defeat and simply move with the tide. But such attitude goes against the Filipino identity known for being resilient and persistent. It also goes against

the Christian identity and mission to remain truthful, steadfast and life-giving, following the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. In these difficult times, more than ever, Filipinos are called to consider the relevance of Christ to their lives, and to gaze upon Christ as model and inspiration. In the midst of this confusing and dehumanizing realities, Filipinos must be made aware of the Christology that presents Jesus as the source of courage and strength for it is Jesus himself who declared that he is Way, the Truth and the Life.

Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life

When speaking about himself in the Gospel, Jesus emphatically declared: "I am the way, the truth and the life" (Jn. 14:6). He did not only show the way but affirmed that he *is* the way that one must follow for he is the truth and life himself.[26] In Jesus, those seeking truth and life, especially in the midst of the modern day chaos are promised to find what they desire. The Synod fathers during the 1998 Special Assembly for Asia affirmed that in him, people who are plagued by profound anxieties and sufferings can find their "deepest questions answered, their hopes fulfilled, their dignity uplifted and their despair conquered."[27] Jesus exhorted, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Mt. 11:28-29*)*. The way of Jesus is not of terror but love, not of force but encouragement, not of cursing and disrespect but kindness, not of boastfulness but humility, not of abandonment but of accompaniment. He showed the world the highest nature of being human and what one needed to do to become truly human. The path of Jesus is the path that ultimately leads everyone to his side, for "Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be." (Jn. 12:26)

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[24] Joe Torres, "Sedition charges against Philippine bishops, priests," *UCA News*, July 19, 2019, accessed December 20, 2019, https://www.ucanews.com/news/sedition-charges-against-philippine-bishops-priests/85674.

Romulo G. Valles, D.D., "On the accusation of sedition against some bishops," *CBCP Online,* July 19, 2019, accessed December 20, 2019, http://cbcponline.net/on-the-accusation-of-sedition-against-some-bishops/.

[25] Socrates B. Villegas, D.D., "For I find no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies – oracle of the Lord God (Ezekiel 18:32)," *CBCP Online*. January 30, 2017, accessed December 20, 2019, http://cbcponline.net/for-i-find-no-pleasure-in-the-death-of-anyone-who-dies-oracle-of-the-lord-god-ezekiel-1832/.

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[26] Francis J. Moloney, S.D.B., *The Gospel of John: Sacra Pagina Series* vol. 4., ed. Daniel J. Harrington, S.J. (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 398.

[27] John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Asia*, November 6, 1999 (Pasay City: Paulines Publishing House, 1999), 14.

Jesus, the Way of/to Truth

Jesus is the Way because he *is* the Truth himself. The Letter of John states, "We know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life" (1 Jn. 5:20). In his goodness and wisdom God chose to reveal Godself to the world and to make known the hidden purpose of His will through Christ, the Son of God, the Word made flesh. The deepest truth about God and the salvation of man shines forth in Christ, who is at the same time the mediator and the fullness of all revelation.[28]

Jesus is the Way of Truth and the Truth in person. It therefore follows that all his words and actions are true and trustworthy. The Gospel of John affirms, "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (Jn. 1:17). Being the embodiment of Truth, Jesus can liberate those who are trapped in ignorance, perjury, lying and hypocrisy.[29] Facing today's rampant fake news, Jesus serves as the ultimate model in seeking and fighting for truth and combatting the proliferation of disinformation. Before Jesus was arrested and crucified, he prayed to the Father: "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth" (John 17:17). The words and teachings of Jesus can serve as inspiration to be steadfast in a mission committed to utilizing communications media at the service of the common good and exercising it to promote truth, freedom, justice and solidarity. Recourse to disinformation, manipulation, political control of opinion, systematically falsifying the truth must be regarded as unacceptable.[30] Therefore, responsibility for a truthful,

fair and objective presentation of information remains a priority and constitutes part of the Christian mission to "sanctify people in truth." Otherwise, as Pope Benedict XVI commented, without trust and love for what is truthful, there is no social conscience and responsibility, and social action ends up serving personal selfish interests and power, resulting in social fragmentation.[31]

In Jesus, one can discover the way to communicate the truth. During his public ministry, Jesus made use of parables and stories, miracles and table fellowships – means which were understandable to people of his time – to convey the truth that he was preaching. Jesus Christ could be seen as the "perfect communicator" for he communicated not only God's message but the mystery of God's inner self. "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father… The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work" (Jn. 14:9-10). Jesus is the perfect revelation of the Father and all his words and actions are geared towards revealing the truth about who the Father is and what the Father desires. "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word" (Heb. 1:3). Because the words that came out of his mouth were words of grace and truth which command authority, people were amazed at his teaching (cf. Luke 4:32; Mt. 7:28-29). In his communication, Jesus sometimes spoke words pleasing to the ears; but at other times, they were like swords that were thrusted into the hearts of his hearers. Indeed, in Jesus Christ, Christians could find the ultimate model and standard of truthful and authoritative communication.

Jesus embodied truth because He did not only preach about the truth but lived it out until the end. Pope Francis keenly observed that the question the present generation faces is not simply whether one can utilize the instruments of communication, but if one can live in a

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[28] Vatican II, "Dei Verbum," November 18, 1965, 2, in *Vatican Council: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* Vol. 1, New Revised Edition, ed. Austin Flannery, O.P. (Pasay City: Paulines Publishing House, 1982), 750.

[29] *Catechism for Filipino Catholics*, New Edition, (Manila: Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education, 1997), 1258.

[30] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Typical Edition (Manila: Word & Life Publications, 1994), 2512.

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[31] Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, June 29, 2009 (Pasay City, Paulines Publishing House, 2009), 5.

highly digitalized culture.[32] In spite of the digital environment's great opportunity for connectivity, there also exists a sense of loneliness, isolation, gradual loss of contact with reality, addiction, manipulation, exploitation and violence, even to the extreme case of the "dark web".[33] The proliferation of disinformation is an expression of a culture that has lost its sense of truth and bends the facts to suit particular interests.[34] The Pope even called the proliferation of disinformation as "snake-tactics" and those who fabricate and disseminate them the "crafty serpent" who, at the dawn of humanity, created the first fake news (cf. Gen 3:1-15) resulting in the tragic history of humanity.[35] Jesus, as the one who communicated truth and lived truth to the end is the antithesis of the serpent; he is the one who "crushed the serpent's head" (cf. Gen. 3:15) and the one to help crush the culture of disinformation.

Jesus, the Way of/to Life

For Christians, life comes from God who made Christ Lord and author of life. In particular, though Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, all beings came to be and live. The Prologue of the Gospel of John conveys, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race (Jn. 1:1-4). Being the giver of life, only God has the right to claim lives.[36] In the Gospels, Jesus did not only abhor killings but even perfected respect for human life by linking it with the commandant to love one's enemies (cf. Mt. 5:43) and intensified

it by forbidding even anger:[37] "You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder'; and 'whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, 'You fool,' you will be liable to the hell of fire" (Mt. 5:21-22).

Jesus in the Gospel affirmed, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly (Jn. 10:10). Jesus made it clear that his coming was for the sake of salvation of the people, which was characterized by their experiencing the fullness of life. The fullness of life necessarily requires overcoming the "culture of death" that is actively fostered by a powerful cultural, economic and political idea of society solely concerned with efficiency resulting in the elimination of the weak, the sick, and the poor who are considered as social burdens.[38] It also opposes the "disposable culture" which treats human beings as consumer goods to be used and then discarded, promoting not only exploitation and oppression but "exclusion".[39] Jesus as the Way of/to Life highlights compassion and kindness, and detests the use of terror and violence as means to an end. Several times in the Gospels, Jesus was moved with compassion towards people enabling Him to heal them (cf. Mt. 9:36; Mt. 14:14), feed them (cf. Mt. 15:32; Mk. 8:2), teach them (cf. Mk. 6:32), and even raised the dead back to life (Lk. 7:13). Throughout His public ministry, the compassion of Jesus was demonstrated in ways that ultimately signified His life-giving presence. All of the actions of Jesus affirmed time and time again that his true mission was "to bring good news to the poor… to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19).

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[32] Francis, *Christus Vivit*, March 25, 2019 (Makati City: Word and Life Publications, 2019), 86.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid., 89.

[35] Francis, *Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for World Communications Day*, January 24, 2018, accessed December 10, 2019, Vatican.va.

[36] CCC, 2258.

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[37] CFC, 1030-1031.

[38] John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, March 25, 1995 (Manila: Daughters of St. Paul, 1995), 12.

[39] Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, November 24, 2013 (Manila: Word & Life Publications, 2013), 53.

Jesus as the Way of/to Life condemns the numerous actions that betray respect for human persons: all offenses against life itself, all violations of the integrity of the human person, and all offenses against human dignity.[40] The Jesus Way of/to Life insists that public authorities are obligated to respect the fundamental rights of the human person and the inalienable rights of every person – the right to life and right to physical integrity, which are inherent in every human person by virtue of his/her origin in God.[41] It also highlights the obligation of each person to respect and care for his own life and the life of others through actions that protect, promote and enhance the quality of life.[42] Jesus as the Way of/to Life declares that a society that is unable to accept its suffering members and incapable of alleviating their suffering is a cruel and inhumane society.[43] In the Gospel, Jesus denounces the attitude of indifference amidst the rampancy of crimes against life and human dignity as he admonishes the unrepentant cities: "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, on the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you" (Mt. 11:21-22).

Finally, accepting Jesus as the Way of/to Life means being reconciled to God the Father. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (Jn. 3;16); "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (1 Jn. 5:11). In Christ Jesus, the whole creation is redeemed and renewed so that human beings can become

"newly expressed," and in a way, "newly created".[44] By showing the world the way beyond death, Jesus Christ demonstrates that he is indeed the Way of/to life and the "true teacher of life".[45]

The Quest for Truth and Life beyond Christianity

Although Christians point to Jesus Christ as the model of the Way, the Truth and the Life, valuing truthfulness and respect for human life and dignity goes beyond the confines of Christianity. They represent some of the universal values that all religious traditions share. Although Philippines is a Christian majority country, the faith-experiences and contributions of members of other religious traditions should not be ignored. The mere fact that the "culture of disinformation" and the "culture of fear, violence and death" affect all Filipinos regardless of gender, social status, economic condition, political leaning and religious affiliation, justifies a concerted cooperative effort to eradicate these evils. The responsibility to act accordingly and immediately, however, finds greater depth and impetus in religious traditions that value truth, human life and dignity, and urge adherents to build peaceful coexistence between peoples and the whole of creation. Religious differences do not exclude the ability to see each other as allies and partners for building the common good of humanity. The Apostle Paul reminds us that "all things work together for the good of those who love God" (Rm 8:28*)*.

The readiness to collaborate with others is an imitation of Jesus Christ who displayed great openness towards men and women of different religions and nationality. Jesus was always ready to enter into dialogue with others, recognizing the good that was in them. The Gospels recorded how Jesus marvelled at the centurion's faith (cf. Mt 8:5-13), performed healing miracles for foreigners and gentiles (cf. Mt. 15:21-28), and conversed with the Samaritan woman (Jn.

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[40] Vatican II, "Gaudium et Spes," December 7, 1965, 27, in *Vatican Council: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Vol. 1, New Revised Edition, ed. Austin Flannery, O.P. (Pasay City: Paulines Publishing House, 1982), 928.

[41] CCC, 2254, 2273.

[42] CFC, 1032.

[43] Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi*, November 30, 2007 (Manila, World and Life Publications, 2007), 38.

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[44] John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, March 4, 1979 (Pasay City, Daughters of St. Paul, 1979), 10.

[45] Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi,* 6.

4:4-41). Jesus the Way, the Truth and the Life, therefore can be an inspiration to all men and women of good will, Christians and non-Christians alike, in their shared quest for truth and life.

Implications of Communicating "Jesus Christ the Way, Truth, and the Life" for Filipinos Today

Communicating Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life in the Philippines today is to proclaim His life and prophetic and liberating message to Filipinos immersed in social, economic and political problems resulting in the emergence of the culture of disinformation and the culture of fear, violence and death. This Christology presents us with three implications:

First, rediscovering Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life for Filipinos in the 21st century calls for responsible use of social and communications media in order to put an end to the culture of disinformation. In 2017, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) released a Pastoral Letter against the proliferation of disinformation which emphasized the faithful's obligation to refrain from patronizing, popularizing and supporting identified sources of "alternative facts" or "fake news," refuting falsehood, refusing to be purveyors of fake news whether on social media or by word of mouth or through any other form of public expression, and identifying the sources of fake news so that others may also be duly alerted.[46]

The call for responsible use of social and communications technology is not something new. In fact, as early as 1971, the Church already implored for a collective effort to ensure that the media of communication do in fact contribute to the pursuit of truth and the acceleration of progress.[47] In 2000, the Church once again reminded the people of the need for some form of continuing media education whether by personal study or participation in an organized program so that there would be more than just acquiring skills related to using media, but also conscience formation, which is the development of standards of good taste and truthful moral judgment.[48] Jesus as the Way, the Truth and the Life reminds Christians of their ongoing duty to always search for and recognize the truth and proclaim it tirelessly for the good of all. As the Psalmist prays: "Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long" (Psalm 25:5)*,* Christians can implore Jesus the Way, the Truth and the Life for help in the extremely difficult task of eradicating disinformation.

Second, reliving Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life challenges Filipinos in the 21st century to revalue human life and promote its sanctity and inviolability. The relentless "war on drugs," increasing cases of extrajudicial killings, and emergence and revival of laws that are contrary to life have exposed a crisis in the state of human life and dignity in the Philippines today. Church officials agree that the problem on illegal drugs must be addressed as soon as possible, but not by way of killing or instilling fear. According to the CBCP, the Philippines is seeing the "reign of terror in many places of the poor. Many are killed not because of drugs. Those who kill them are not brought to account."[49]

Jesus as the Way, the Truth and the Life stresses that respect for the human person entails considering one's neighbour without exception as another self, taking first into account human life and the means to live with dignity.[50] It is part of the Christian duty to see that life remains valuable no matter how sinful the person may be.

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[46] Socrates B. Villegas, D.D., "Consecrate them in Truth: A Pastoral Exhortation Against Fake News," *CBCP Online,* June 21, 2017, accessed December 10, 2019, http://cbcponline.net/consecrate-them-in-the-truth/.

[47] Pontifical Commission for Social Communications, *Communio et*

Progressio, May 23, 1971, accessed December 30, 2019, Vatican.va.

[48] Pontifical Commission for Social Communications, *Ethics in Communications,* June 2, 2000, accessed December 30, 2019, Vatican.va.

[49] Villegas, "For I find no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies."

[50] Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes,* 27.

Sins should be detested, but the sinners should never be abandoned. This means that every accused person is presumed innocent until proven guilty. Evil means can never be justified no matter how good the end may be. Amidst the reign of terror and death, the words of Jesus can serve to awake the conscience: "There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance" (Luke 15:7); Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners" (Mt. 9:13). When Filipinos allow the culture of fear, violence and death to prevail and enslave one another, the identity of Filipinos and the memories of the Filipino forefathers who fought for life and freedom are also betrayed. In the same manner, Filipino Christians as disciples of Christ cannot support actions that imperil life for it is contrary to the person and mission of Jesus Christ. Filipinos are called to promote and value human life and dignity because "when Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory" (Col. 3:4).

Third, highlighting Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life for Filipinos in the 21st century is to gaze upon him as the ultimate model for moral living, catalyst for personal, social and political renewal and reconciliation, and inspiration in reviving the excellent Filipino and Christian values of *bayanihan* (cooperation), *pagkakaisa* (solidarity), *pagmamalasakit* (concern)*, pakikiramay* (empathy). Jesus also serves as stimulus for the resurgence of hope and impetus for the uncompromising defense of the truth and human life at all cost. The Catholic Church in the Philippines, together with human right advocates and concerned citizens, inspired by the model of Jesus can stand up and demand that the system of instilling fear and of rampant abuses against human life and dignity be stopped, wrongs be rectified, and the damages be repaired. They must demand for appropriate actions to be done, truths to be said, rights to be respected, and justice and the rule of law to be enforced. They must demand not superficial changes, but profound changes properly motivated and guided by justice and love.

Pope John Paul II was keen in his analysis that the emergence and prevalence of the culture of fear, violence, and death is ushered by the eclipse of the sense of God and man.[51] Jesus the Way, the Truth and Life never closed his eyes to the plight of his fellow human beings nor stop gazing upon the Father. Jesus demonstrates that authentic living is not only looking inward but also looking outward and gazing upward. This is very clear in his admonition to love God above all things and love one's neighbour as oneself (cf. Lk. 10:27) to which he added, "Do this and you will live." Indifference, unconcern and the attitude of safely staying in one's comfort zones while other people suffer is contrary to the way of Filipinos who always put family and other people ahead of self. This Filipino characteristic has been observed in the countless calamities taking place in the country. Today, more than ever, the Filipino values of *bayanihan, pagkakaisa*, *pagmamalasakit,* and *pakikiramay* rediscovered and reaffirmed in the Jesus model are needed in order to eradicate the culture of disinformation and the culture of fear, violence and death. Whoever chooses inaction and indifference, as Pope Francis charges, is guilty of having blood on their hands for their comfortable and silent complicity.[52]

Conclusion

The 21st century is indeed a very challenging times for Filipinos. On one hand, it has brought progress and development, connectivity and easy access to information. Although it has brought about new agencies for globalization, it also created opportunities for the oppressors to manipulate the mindset of the poor and the weak and enabled the individualistic attitudes that lead to ambivalence and indifference, lack of solidarity, disrespect for human life and dignity, and negating truthfulness.

To the question of *"Who is Jesus for Filipinos of the 21st century?"* perhaps the answer is:

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[51] John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, 24.
[52] Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 211.

You are the path that leads us to untiringly search for truth and proclaim it constantly in order to eradicate the culture of disinformation around us. You are the path that leads us to courageously respect and promote human life and dignity, denounce all forms of injustice and oppression, and eradicate the culture of fear, violence and death that imperils our society. You are the path that leads to bayanihan, pagkakaisa, pagmamalasakit, and pakikiramay that will enable us to defeat indifference and ambivalence. You are Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life!

The "how" to communicate this Christology, however, poses a greater challenge. It remains a matter to further think about and explore. Communicating this Christology is more than just simply informing the people; rather, it is enabling the value for truth and the respect for human life and dignity to sink in and touch the heart of every Filipino regardless of age, gender, socio-economic and political status, and religious affiliation. Communicating this Christology is to appeal to the consciousness and core values of Filipinos, inspiring and transforming each person from within in order to achieve liberation from the ongoing oppressive and enslaving forces of falsehood, fear, violence, death. This is never an easy task and profitable results are not expected to be reaped overnight. However, this attempt for values and faith formation inspired by and focused on following Jesus Christ the Way, the Truth, and the Life must immediately commence before it is too late.

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BOOK NOTES

Clark, Irene L. (ed.): Concepts in Composition. Theory and Practices in the Teaching of Writing. Third Edition. (Oxford/ New York: Routledge, 2019). 465 pp.

This book is somehow unique not only in its way of presenting "theory and practices in the praxis of writing" as the subtitle says but also in the way six different authors are present independent from Irene Clark as the main author and editor. It is not a 'handbook' in the traditional sense but much more for the developing field of "teaching of writing." The ten sections of the publication are individually structured into main themes of concern with a kind of introduction by the editor to be followed by 'texts for reading' from different authors and sources.

For the field of "teaching of writing," which is much more than simple 'journalism,' "many other elements need to be considered like "prior knowledge, motivation, identity, dispositions as well as political, social, cultural contexts" (p. IX). The book wants with tis third edition–the first were published already in 2003 and 2012–to help teachers to find answers for themselves by helping them to understand connections between a 'theoretical concept' and a class room lesson.

The publication is written from and for mainly the North American situation but has also something to 'teach' to other parts and cultures of the world.

Every one of the ten chapters begins with a general introduction to be followed by excerpts and texts from other authors to specify and in some way illustrate and underline the respective concerns. It aims to help teachers to find answers for themselves by helping to understand connections between a theoretical concept and classroom lessons. The publication also presents also a section on "teaching multilingual students in a composition class" (p. 272 ff) which will be especially helpful in multilingual environments.

A chapter on "issues in digital and multimodal writing: composition instruction for the 21st century" (pp. 379 ff) presents beside others five different "modes of communication": aural, oral, visual, gestural, spatial. The combination of these modes also determines the outcome of a communication process. The considerations on "digital writing" (p. 386) and the "Rise of Digital Media" (p. 388) will be especially helpful for modern ways of communicating.

Every chapter of the book presents also in special 'boxes' discussion questions and proposes assignments which makes the publication very practical and more thorough in its approach to new developments and challenges in the "theory and practices for the teaching of writing" as the subtitle promises.

Taylor, Bryan C. and Hamilton Bean (eds.): The Handbook of Communication and Security. (New York/London: Routledge, 2019). 431 pp.

This publication is part of a "handbook series" of the International Communication Association (ICA) where already nine other "handbooks" have been published. This book contains twenty-three studies which "explore various social communication processes through which human groups negotiate perceptions of and resources to threats against things they value" (Foreword, p. XII). The introduction of the editors states that this handbook offers no simple solution to that alternately static and mutating simple conflict, it does create, however, an opportunity to better understand how various groups have used their communicative resources to propose, sustain and challenge the policies that guide its conduct". The book should show "how communication scholars engage with 'security' and how securities studies scholars conceptualize 'communication' (p. 4).

This volume is designed to provide a substantive depiction of major theoretical, methodological and topical themes on the study

of communication and security. The editors understand the book "merely as a foundation on which more advanced research can be built" (p.14).

After the comprehensive introduction of the editors on "conceptualizing communication and security" individual studies are grouped into three parts: "Communication Contexts and Genres," "Special Topics," and concluding with "The Futures of Communication and Security."

Like usual for such collections the quality of the individual contributions differ, but all of them conclude with a complete "List of References." Most of the authors are from the United States reflecting the experiences there. The only five 'foreign' of 29 contributors are from Australia, Canada, China, and Europe. The different fields of concerns of the first part of the book include group communication, health, intercultural, organizational and political communication. In the second part ten contributions are related in a more specific way to certain topics and fields. Here, however, Religion as a specific concern and communication experience is missing not only for the US but especially also for and in a continent like Asia. After all, images and statutes but especially rituals play an important role to 'protect' people and property as can be seen for example in many buildings and houses in Thailand. Many rituals in different religions are 'security' related which is a special concern of this volume and should not be missing!

This publication concludes with an extensive list of names (pp. 410 to 425) and subjects (pp. 426-431).

BOOK REVIEW

Coleman, Flynn. A Human Algorithm: How Artificial Intelligence Is Redefining Who We Are. (Berkeley, California: Counterpoint, 2019), 303 pp.

Books on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its potentially profound impact on the future of humanity is becoming increasingly ubiquitous on the shelves of bookstores. In the case of *A Human Algorithm: How Artificial Intelligence Is Redefining Who We Are*, it is the listing on Amazon in the form of a Kindle version, which was brought to the attention of this reviewer by the exact technology that is the focus on this book. Its author, Flynn Coleman, based on the biography included in the book is, among various things, an international human rights attorney, educator and "social innovator," and not directly involved in the field of AI research and development. Thus, the book represents an extremely well-researched and thoughtful perspective of an interested "outsider" to the field, who approaches the discourse using terminology and methods of presentation that are more accessible to the general public. This, one surmises, is intentional on Coleman's part because one recognizes from the content of the book that the author would like for not only experts but all people to become aware of the increasingly important role of AI technology permeating human life.

What the book lacks in terms of technical depth is made up by the rather wide scope of the topics covered in the ten chapters covering a multitude of issues including:

- the history of technological development through the ages;
- the science surrounding AI technology;
- impending doom and gloom scenarios predicted about AI due to such things as automation, the development of "killer robots," and other intrusive uses of the technology;
- the promises of tremendous benefits that AI brings to human beings in terms of helping to resolve physical, social, and emotional issues plaguing human lives;

- the effects of AI technology on economic, political, social and religious systems, which will simultaneously have to transform itself to adapt to AI as well as be transformed by the ongoing presence of AI technology;
- the ethical conundrums faced by human beings that will continue to be played out when AI machines take over the task of decision-making and implementing those choices;
- the value and rights that humans might ascribe to AI, especially in the distant future when AI machines might be considered to have "self-awareness" or "consciousness."
- the concept of "intelligence" that humans might want to consider in developing AI, that which is not necessarily modeled on human intelligence but other possible types of intelligence existent in the world;
- and the personal transformation that human beings themselves must undergo in order to create AI entities imbued with empathy and other ethical virtues.

With ten chapters and nearly fifty sub-headings, it is not easy to summarize the book's rather rich content. However, there are a number of salient points in the book that are worth mentioning, and could be considered the author's most valuable contribution to the discourse on AI development.

1. *The definition and understanding of "intelligence" is not uniform*. In fact, human intelligence comes in a variety of forms, and many different types of intelligence could be found among non-human creatures. Certain forms of intelligence that are present in other living things are either not present in human beings or exist in a lesser degree. The author calls for approaching the issue of intelligence in AI development not simply based on the model of human intelligence, which while makes it easier for humans to understand, limits curiosity and creativity and reinforces a dismissive attitude towards other impressive forms of

intelligence, for example, that seen in octopuses, which use their intelligence to navigate the world in very different ways from human beings. Indeed, the author believes that by insisting on a hierarchy of intelligence with human intelligence being on top and the model for AI development may not be the best modus operandi. "We need to expand our fundamental approach to thinking about…what constitutes intelligence, and push our intellectual curiosity to fully esteem all types of intelligence if we want to properly design, implement, and coexist with AI."

2. *The author affirms the danger of homogeneity and the power of heterogeneity in the work of AI development.* Coleman is certainly not the first writer to call attention to the dismal lack of diversity among the people charged with the task of designing the human future. Not only is there a lack of ethnic and gender diversity, there is also a lack of involvement from other fields that are essential to the development of AI such as psychology, neuroscience, biomimicry, and philosophy etc. She writes, "Although many of the current leaders in the AI field have been trained at the most prestigious schools and have earned advanced degrees, most have received virtually no training in the ethical ramifications of creating intelligent machines, largely because such training has not historically been a standard expectation for specialists in the field." In addition to a lack of interdisciplinary cooperation and ethnic and gender diversity, entities working in AI development seem to be doing so in silos. Coleman writes that virtually all of the current AI development work is taking place in disparate laboratories, secret government facilities, elite academic institutions, and the offices tech giants without much sharing going on. This reality is rather frightening considering Ian Hogarth's observation that "There are perhaps 700 people in the world who can contribute

to the leading edge of AI research, perhaps 70,000 who can understand their work and participated actively in commercializing it and 7 billion people who will be impacted by it." Coleman insists that AI development rely on the "combinatorial creativity" that takes place when ideas originate from individuals of diverse backgrounds.

3. *The benefits outweigh the threats if AI is developed the right way.* Although Coleman devotes a chapter each for the pro and con perspectives, highlighting the two extremes of the spectrum, one gets the feeling that Coleman leans towards the rosier vision of AI development. It is understandable because as Coleman points out, AI development will advance and go forward regardless of how one feels about it. Therefore, rather than being bogged down by the prospect of doom and gloom, it is more beneficial to discuss and devise ways that make affect the process of development in a positive way, which is precisely the spirit of Coleman's book. One of AI's potential benefits that may pleasantly surprise us is that it can help "combat assaults on truth and reason currently propagated through algorithms by exposing the abuse and manipulation of data." This assertion at first sounds rather contradictory because presently, the rampant fake news, misinformation and disinformation is partially a consequence of development of the same algorithms that are employed in AI development. However, with advanced AI development, we can hope to design algorithms that can scan tremendous amount of information and determine whether something is fake news or fact. The prospect that a nonpolitical and dispassionate machine can instantly fact-check Donald Trump every time he makes a declaration will certainly bring a smile to many people's faces.

4. *As Coleman insists on diversity in ethnicity, gender and*

academic disciplines in the AI development process, she also calls for a place for religion at the round table. "Religion, belief, and prayer have a place in the discussion of AI and ethics, because whether you are an atheist, an agnostic, or a believer, religion still matters on some level—whether as a belief system, an ethical framework, or a cultural touchstone—to much of the world's human population," she writes. Coleman points out that "AI itself is fostering new kinds of religions with rites and rituals devoted to electronic gods." Indeed, religion and religious adherents have a stake in the future of technology, especially because theology and spirituality may be drastically transformed as a result of technological advances. As a result, the voice of religion need not be excluded as directions and answers are sought for the future.

5. *An ethical AI algorithm is dependent on an ethical human algorithm.* This is Coleman's most poignant and important message in this book, and is especially aimed at those having a direct role in AI development. Coleman points out that it is essential for human survival that the smart machines we build are embedded with virtues, especially that of empathy so that they can identify and appropriately respond to human concerns and emotions. However, in order to create AI algorithms that enable the machines to serve us well, it is essential that a human algorithm, the philosophical center of our being be mapped. "Our technology will mirror our human algorithms, and that is our destiny. We want it to know us, in all our imperfect human complexity; to protect us, to remind us of the best in us, to become a trusted partner." Thus, the intention is that as we build smart machines that are imbued with noble values reflecting the human algorithms, the human culture itself will also be enriched. Machines, therefore, become partners in the endeavor to make our lives, our

environment and our world better. This partnership with machines for a brighter future, however, requires human beings to think out of the box, to dare to trust in what lies ahead, and perhaps even to think of intelligent machines as our equals.

Some of the points extracted from Coleman's book as presented above may be easier for certain readers to accept than others. Those who are beginners in making acquaintance with AI will find this book comprehensive, instructive, eye opening and even provocative. Those who are already in the field may find the ideas put forth challenging if taken to heart. Indeed, despite the promise that AI can be used to solve the world's most perplexing issues such as social and political conflict, environmental degradation, and economic inequality, it is uncertain if those few individuals who are controlling the AI development will ever choose to use the technology to solve the very problems of which they are intimately a part of by virtue of their position and wealth. As long as AI technology is perceived and treated as instrument for acquiring power and wealth by a small number of nations and individuals, which seems to be the case today, it is hard to imagine that humanity will be able to escape the familiar scenario that you can't have the good without agreeing to take some of the bad.

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